

VITALIC LIARS CELLULOID RECORDS HUGH MASEKELA NIGHTMARES ON WAX SHADOWHUNTAZ

# MILK&R

96  
APRIL  
2006

ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE

## E-40, KING OF THE BAY

In conversation with the high priest of hyphy.



8-Bit Musicians Like To Byte • Space 1026 Sees the Future - Running With Wolves

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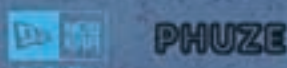
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3/10	Scottsdale	Mickey's	7pm
3/11	Tempe	Gordon Biersch Brewery	7pm
3/12	Anaheim	World Baseball Classic	8pm
3/13	Anaheim	World Baseball Classic	7pm
3/14	Anaheim	World Baseball Classic	4pm
3/15	Anaheim	World Baseball Classic	7pm
3/16	Anaheim	World Baseball Classic	4pm
3/17	Anaheim	ESPN Zone	7pm
3/18	San Diego	World Baseball Classic	12pm
3/20	San Diego	World Baseball Classic FINAL	4pm
3/21	Los Angeles	Loyola University, Rec. Ctr.	12pm
3/22	Los Angeles	Hollywood Billiards	7pm
3/24	Berkeley	UC Berkeley, Bears Lair	5pm
3/27	Denver	Sports Column	7pm
3/29	Albuquerque	U. of N. Mexico, Stu. Union Atrium	4pm
3/31	Ok. City	U. of Oklahoma, Norman Field	7pm
4/1	Ok. City	U. of Oklahoma, Norman Field	3pm
4/2	Ok. City	U. of Oklahoma, Norman Field	1pm
4/3	Weatherford	Southwestern State, SUB Building	4pm
4/5	Dallas	Ameritrust Field	7pm
4/6	Dallas	Ameritrust Field	7pm
4/7	Houston	Minute Maid Park	7pm
4/8	Austin	Ringers Sports Lounge	7pm
4/9	Dallas	Gameworks	7pm
4/11	Tampa	Gameworks	7pm
4/14	Miami	Gameworks	7pm
4/16	Atlanta	ESPN Zone	7pm
4/17	Atlanta	Georgia State, Rec. Ctr	7pm
4/18	Atlanta	Georgia Southern, Rec. Ctr	12pm
4/19	Clemson	Clemson U, Rec. Ctr	7pm
4/20	Charleston	Charleston Southern, Rec. Ctr.	7pm
4/21	Wilmington	U of NC, Wilmington, Rec. Ctr.	7pm
4/22	Chapel Hill	U of NC, Chapel Hill, Rec Ctr	1pm
4/24	Richmond	Commonwealth U, Rec. Ctr	7pm
4/25	D.C.	GWU, Hippodrome	5pm
4/27	West Chester	West Chester U, Rec. Ctr	7pm
4/28	New York City	Hofstra U, Rec Ctr.	7pm
4/29	New York City	ESPN Zone, Times Sq.	7pm



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Jel photographed in his living room by Christopher Woodcock



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VOOMVOOMPENG PENG

## ED'S RANT FULL COVERAGE



It's been said that only the good die young. Maybe that's true. Coming just a week before we sent this issue to the presses, our music world was rocked by the news of J Dilla's passing. It was hard to believe that the man who many believed was going to save hip-hop—uniting the mainstream and indie factions of a fractured, often fucked-up genre—was gone in that instant. Of course, it wasn't instant—Dilla had long been plagued by illness. But he kept it under wraps, coming off to fans as an invincible (if shadowy) Superman of rhythm. That he left behind two albums worth of material only made us question how much more good stuff we were never going to get to hear.

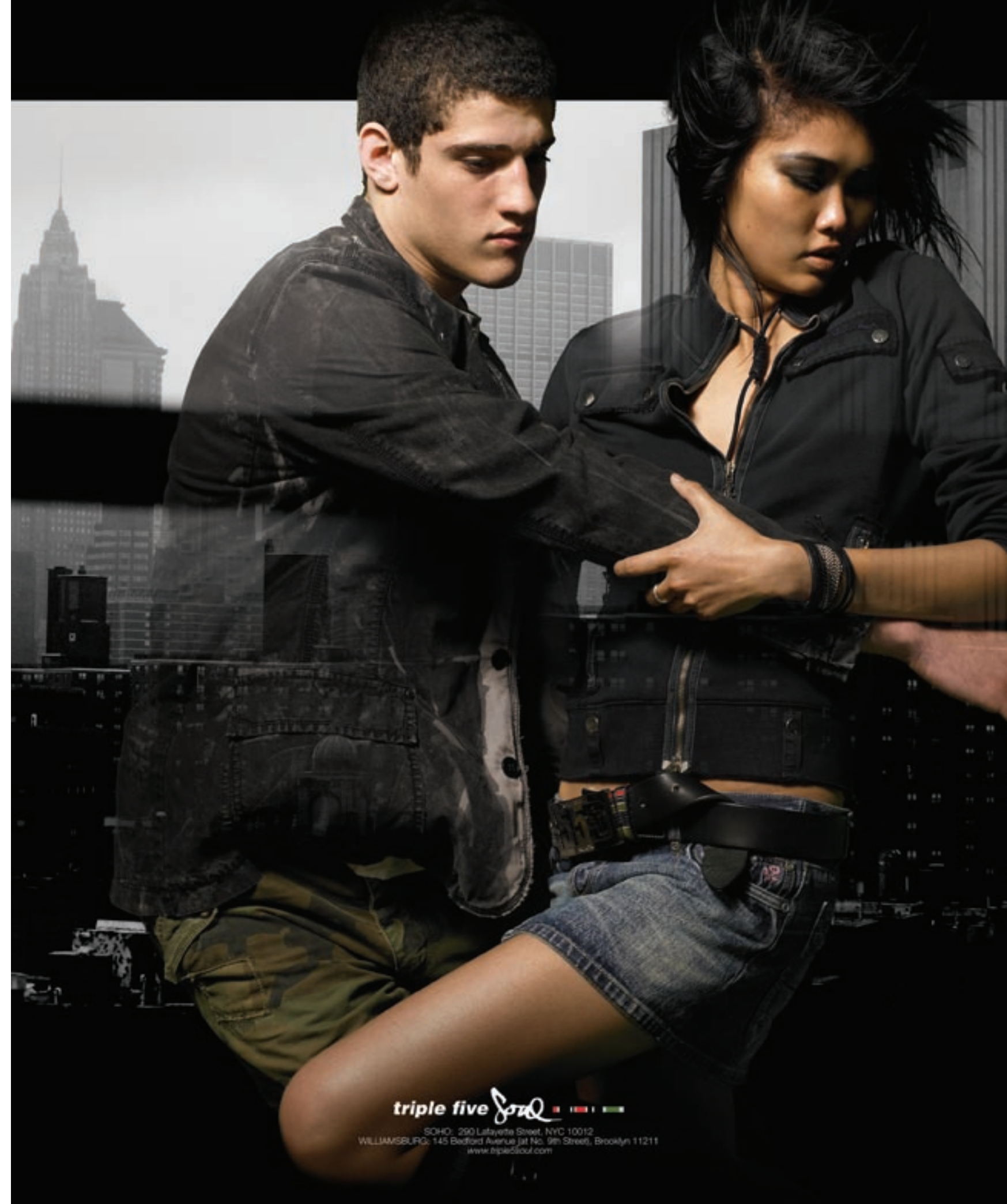
The only thing to do, after the din of fears about one's own morality quieted down, was get to work. That's what we did, even though nobody much felt like it at first. With *Domus*—Dilla's February Stones Throw release—as an insistent backdrop, we pursued the trail of another legendary hip-hop personality: E-40. Coming from the Bay Area, 40's slang peppers nearly every conversation and Sick Wid It Records tracks like "Captain Save-A-Hoe," "Sprinkle Me," and The Click's "Hurricane" are staples of every house party, from Pac Heights mansions to Market and 26th in the heart of Oakland's gritty grimy. Hunkered down in my Brooklyn bunker, blizzard outside, I was ecstatic to get a call from our creative director screaming like a little schoolgirl, having just come off the phone with 40 Watter himself.

'Tis the season where we also prepare to fly south for the winter, tanning our pasty hides at Miami's Winter Music Conference. Since we like to do special things this time of year, we bring you a collectible cover just for the event. Who better to grace it than French techno banger Vitalic, whose alias suggests the energy cocktail that is his music. Like squeezing blood from a stone, British journalist Piers Martin got the scoop from the rather reticent Frenchman. Meanwhile, New York City design bad-ass Dust La Rock placed Vitalic in a candy-colored world full of gold chains, roses, and a stopwatch; according to the designer, the latter is meant to evoke "the relationship of life to time." Yes, graphic designers *do* think about this metaphorical shizzle.

Hard as this issue was to produce, it was also pretty damn funny. The editorial staff argued over important issues, like whether or not an actual "hyphy movement" exists and if "pimpin'," as used in the Bay, is a noun or an adjective. We practiced our thizz faces. Our server was hacked by someone at [www.gaycanada.com](http://www.gaycanada.com). A staff BBQ—complete with the obligatory 1.75 liter bottle of Maker's Mark—ended with a dancehall queen show, wrestling, and a floor smeared with Costco guacamole. I knew we were at our wits' end when I walked in on designer David Clark staring off into space with a soundtrack of wolves howling in the background.

But, hey, when things get tough, we just get wilder...and work harder.

- Vivian Host, Editor



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**ON THE COVER:** E-40 photographed by Jonathan Mannion; alternate cover of Vitalic illustrated by Dust La Rock

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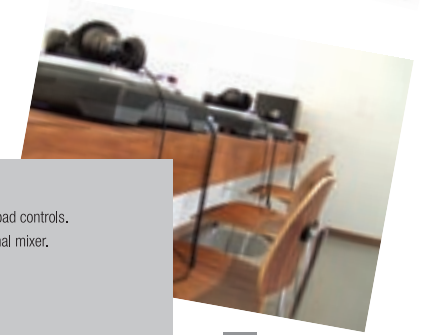
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### LAB FOOTNOTES

1. Numark TTUSB : an affordable turntable outfitted with a USB output.
2. M-Audio Axiom Series : M-Audio's new deluxe line of controllers with semi-weighted keys and drum pad controls.
3. Rane TTM 57SL : the first mixer to integrate the Serato interface and controls, also works as a traditional mixer.
4. Our New Website : completely redesigned with watch list, account, and new search features!
5. Beat Konducta CD : new Madlib release with free Stones Throw Fan Club 45 (while supplies last).
6. Hollertronix : the Lab is the definitive place to get Hollertronix releases and exclusives.
7. Belkin Kickstand Case : this ingenious case allows you to watch your iPod video hands-free.
8. Also Known As Vol.1 + KR Books : the Lab carries all releases from Also Known As, the top graf book publisher.
9. LRG Gear : you can't be buying production gear all the time, check out our selection of LRG clothing, one of the best online.
10. Turntable Lab Los Angeles : features the most comfortable listening stations, equipment, music, books, clothing, and more.
11. TTL Estoy Con Estupido Blog : yes, we are now in the blog game, check for daily updates.





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## CONTRIBUTORS



### MARTIN DE LEON II

Brooklyn-based writer Martin De Leon II started the freelance hustle when he bugged Hua Hsu about *The Wire*. Years later, he has carpal tunnel, watches *Rushmore* too much, and follows DJs around for little money. He has written for *URB*, *The Austin Chronicle*, *Stop Smiling*, *Signal to Noise*, and *Metro Pop*. He's working on two books: a collection of short stories entitled *neuro* and another one on weirdo electronic music from Latin-Amerikkka. He runs the moderately interesting blog, *Hold On to Young Ideas*.

[www.m-dee.blogspot.com](http://www.m-dee.blogspot.com)



### DUST LA ROCK

20 years. That's the minimum required prison sentence Joshua Prince (a.k.a. Dust La Rock) was facing for solicitation of narcotics. It's a good thing designers aren't usually required to mention their police record. "Like a stepping razor, don't you watch my sides/I'm dangerous," warns Brooklyn-based La Rock, quoting Peter Tosh. Ole' Dusty designed our limited-edition Vitalic cover for this issue (see page 6 for pictures of both covers), and illustrated the corresponding story.

[www.knuckleduster.net](http://www.knuckleduster.net)



### ROSS HOGG

When he's not writing about the latest sounds from Jamaica or tracking down elusive Bay Area rap 12"s, Ross Hogg (a.k.a. Duppy Ranks) can be found playing said tunes on mix CDs and at clubs in the Bay and beyond. The Texas native moved to San Francisco in 1997 and began DJing shortly thereafter. He lives with his wife, DJ Neta, the better-looking half of Ital Selection HiFi, who humors him when he tries to incorporate E-40's vernacular into his everyday speech.

[www.italselection.com](http://www.italselection.com)



### FRED MIKETA

When he's not penning stories for *SOMA*, *Mesh*, and *XLR8R*, Oakland, CA-based writer Fred Miketa can be seen around the office under the guise of Duke Trancemonster, summoning news for *XLR8R.com*, probing through mountains of spam in our letters box, and expressing discontent for any number of records he may have heard lately. Fred is working on his first illustrated book of prose, currently titled *Free Love in the Time of Cholera*, and moonlights as one-half of the death rock troupe Carousel.

5000 fast





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to [letters@xlr8r.com](mailto:letters@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.

word on this piss-poor DJ running rampant around LA. Gotta keep it anonymous, but that's how it goes sometimes. But thanks for putting that out there in press. That was probably one of the best things that I read all of last year. So keep it up and hopefully we won't see him trying to fit his way into every piece of shit show from the West coast to the East coast.

*Anon, via XLR8R's general voicemail*

### Sneak Attack

Nice stuff on the sneaker game last issue ["Kick Game;" Issue 95], but why didn't you include anything on Methamphibian? He's the king of freaking Nikes and his kicks go for hella cash on the net. *Barry, via the web*

### XLR8R responds:

True enough. Meth ([www.methamphibian.com](http://www.methamphibian.com)) is also one of our favorite sneaker customizers. There are so many people whose work we are feeling, it was hard to narrow down the list, but rest assured you'll be seeing the best of the rest covered throughout the magazine in other places.

**So, what say you?** Is hyphy really hyper, or is it literally just spinnin' its wheels? Is Vitalic really a French techno deity? What if God was a DJ? Have your say at [letters@xlr8r.com](mailto:letters@xlr8r.com). But don't get lost in the shuffle of penis-enlargement spam—title your entry "XLR8R letter."

### CORRECTIONS

In issue #95's "45 Kings" piece on reggae stores, we misprinted the first sentence of the Moodies entry. It should have read "Flatbush is the heart and soul of Caribbean New York and Greenwich Village could be the vinyl capital of the world, but NYC's pre-eminent reggae shop is in a far-flung corner of the northeastern Bronx." Moodies is also located under the 225th Street elevated station (not the 22nd Street station). Also in "45 Kings," we quoted Ernie B as saying he "purchased about 20,000 records from Tin Reddy's basement;" the records were purchased from the basement of VP Records' Randy Chin. In #95's hip-hop column, the *Discuss the Benefits of Said Collaborative Efforts Volume 1* EP is by Foscil and Specs One; and we meant to say that Sloppy White's *Get Some* mixtape riffs off samples from *Smokey* and *The Bandit*. In #95's Lucky 13 column, Panacea's EP on Glow-In-The-Dark Records is actually titled *Thinking Back, Looking Forward*. XLR8R deeply regrets the errors.

### XLR-H8ing

I just want to put an anonymous thank you out there to you guys for listing your top five worst things for 2005—Steve Aoki ["Bitter Bastard;" Issue 93]. Thank you so much for actually listing that and continuing to help spread the

## XLR8R'S "COVER TO COVER" CONTEST

Win a hot tee from Freegums & the best of the month's music.

You read the mag every month. You've swapped the famed Boards of Canada issue #47 on eBay. And now you're wondering, "Whoa, XLR8R! What's up with the dual covers?" Here's what's up: we're cover crazy, and we've gone and pimped out two different styles for the month—the West coast gets hyphy; the East coast (for our friends in Miami) gets hyped. But we want you to do more than just read about the music (hint hint: INCITE Online), we want you to hear it, too. This month, get your paws on music from our dual cover models **E-40** and **Vitalic**, plus Yay Area heroes **San Quinn** and **Balance** and Munich's funkmeister **Muallem**. We're also giving away **Vice Recordings'** much-ballyhooded grime comp **Run the Road Vol. 2**, the lauded **Ghostly International** label's **Idols Tryouts Two**, and a pair from Oakland's **Tigerbeat6** imprint: **Clipd Beaks' Preyers** and **Drop the Lime's Shot Shot Hearts**. One lucky reader will get a special t-shirt from the skilful and fashionable hands of Miami's **Freegums**, who gets profiled in this month's Vis-Ed.

### To win, hit us with your best double-shot:

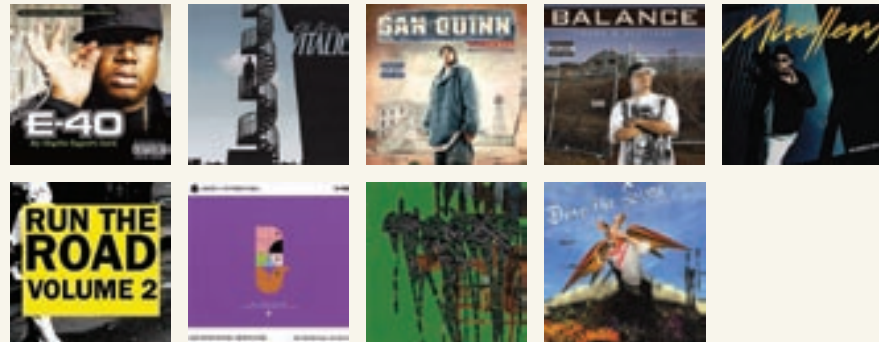
- 1) Think the East can't be beat? Is the West still the best? Stir up a turf war in 200 words or less.
- 2) Then tell us about your favorite XLR8R cover and why it's apple of your eye.

**One Grand Prize Winner will receive** a t-shirt from Freegums and copies of all the CDs listed.

**Four Runners Up will receive** a copy of each of the CDs listed.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Entries must be received by May 17, 2006. Send your answers to XLR8R's Cover to Cover Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "Cover-to-Cover Contest" in the subject line.

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## BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S HIP-HOP H8TERADE



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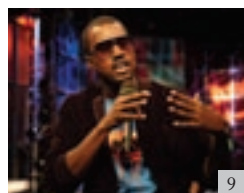
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9



1

**3. Scott Storch** Storch is the producer behind catchy hits like Terror Squad's "Lean Back" and 50 Cent's "Candy Shop." But despite the fact that he gets paid \$90,000 per track, he still looks like an overgrown toadstool with South Floridian spiky frat boy hair and see-through sunglasses. His habit of going out with every female he makes beats for—including Lil' Kim, Paris Hilton, and reggaeton artist Nox—is just the icing on the cake.

**4. PEOPLE PROBLEMS** Can someone explain to me how hip-hop artists, on average, have two publicists, two managers, and three label reps and yet it is impossible to get them to show up to a photo shoot or interview on time?

**5. FUNKMASTER FLEX** On mainstream radio, the same 10 hip-hop songs get played all day every day and this guy is kind of to blame. Nas, EA Ski, and KRS-One have all accused this most famous proponent of payola; you basically have to drop \$40,000 on rims at his custom car shop to get your record played on his annoying-ass show, which commands 10% of the listeners in the NY area at any given time.

**6. TRUESCHOOLERS** Just as annoying as dudes in air-brushed Snowman shirts and "believing the hype" are those "old-school heads" who love to talk about the "Golden Era" of hip-hop and "back in the day." Maybe if you weren't so busy romanticizing the past, you could be changing the present.

**7. SWAY CALLOWAY AND LALA** Granted, you can't expect too much from MTV VJs. But it's hard to suffer

through Lala's cheerleader/groupie vibes on *Direct Effect*—not to mention MTV swaddling her ample frame in appliqué jeans and cherry prints. Sway is obviously smart, but he's getting too big for his already-large headwrap and dude mumbles like a muhfucker.

**8. SERIOUSLY...** Why isn't anyone in hip-hop funny anymore? Chingo Bling and Flavor Flav don't count.

**9. KANYE WEST** Is anyone else getting tired of this guy complaining about how misunderstood he is? His lumpy face and his even lumpier voice? His totally uninformed, basic-level rhymes that he tries to pass off as relevant political/social commentary? His lame-ass bougie fashion look? Oh, and the *Rolling Stone* cover depicting him as Jesus. C'mon people.

**10. SOUL LOOPS** One day, young producer, you will have bought every soul and funk record ever made on eBay and sampled every obscure break—and you know what? Your tracks will still suck. Dope beats are not just about who has the rarest funk loops. Listen to some techno.

**B**J's bitter about a lot of things: changing global weather patterns, work, chronic hemorrhoids. But somehow hip-hop still chafes more than all of those. Here's BJ's April guide to the most annoying people and trends in rapville.

**1. KIMORA LEE SIMMONS** Simmons' Baby Phat line has insured that jiggling butts will be clad in ungodly shades of velour until the year 3000. But the latest from the former model (whose adolescent nickname was "Chinky Giraffe") is a guide to being sexy and successful called *Fabulosity: What It Is and How To Get It*. I can't wait to take advice from a woman who spent the entirety of her *Vanity Fair* interview saying that she will never hesitate to "beat a bitch's ass."

**2. UMM, FEMALE MCS?** Hip-hop's been around for 25 years now? How come there are still almost no quality female artists? Lauryn Hill's all salty, Lil' Kim went off the deep end (then to prison), Foxy Brown is deaf, Trina's gone pop R&B, Rah Digga is M.I.A., and Remy Ma's future looks bleak with Terror Squad. Man, Jean Grae got a lot to do.



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# JUDITH JUILLERAT

SINISTER LULLABIES RING OUT FROM THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE.

WORDS: ANNA BALKRISHNA ILLUSTRATION: NOPATTERN

The harshly beautiful music of Judith Juillerat speaks pointedly of rain-damp alleyways in Berlin or Cologne, so it's a shock to find out that she operates light years away from Germany's techno epicenters. Juillerat hails from Besançon, a sleepy French town with no music community to speak of—it's home to nothing much, actually, besides some nice foliage and the aged walls of the town citadel. And as a 36-year-old, full-time mother—entering the studio only after her two kids are asleep—Juillerat is both a latecomer and an anomaly in the electronic music game.

Juillerat also boasts a surprisingly wholesome bio for one whose music is so dark. "I like listening to uneasy music," she explains. "It's good sometimes to be face to face with fear. It allows us to start from scratch. But, of course, I avoid listening to too much terrifying music with my children—they will have plenty of time to hear it later!"

It's telling that Juillerat's first album, *Soliloquy*, unfurls like a collection of sinister lullabies. Employing a limited arsenal of hardware ("software is too indirect"), she crafts techno love letters pulsating with mechanized cricket drones, the echoes of distant bells, and her own smoky voice. Tracks are by turns soothing and discomfiting, like "mes nuits sont plus belles que vos jours," which begins with a music box chime and Juillerat's bedtime humming, but disintegrates into an eerie loop of the Pledge of Allegiance.

By *Soliloquy*'s release, Juillerat had already been making music in her living room for 12 years, first "borrowing" her then-boyfriend's gear, then improvising on her own, inspired by albums

like Laurie Anderson's *Bright Red/Tighrope*. But she'd never made anything public before 2004, when—on one fateful Friday—a friend told her about a UNICEF-sponsored contest to remix Björk's "Army of Me." The contest ended that Monday, and an energized Juillerat worked through the weekend to produce the seething revision—renamed "a(r)mour" on *Soliloquy*—that would ultimately win out over 600 contestants.

The same year, Juillerat began talking to the Berlin-based Shitkatapult label. "Their eclecticism attracted me," she recalls. "So one day I just sent a demo. Three months later I was in touch with [label boss T. Raumschmiere], who said he loved 'haphazardly' and would like to make a version for his album." (The track, featuring Juillerat's muted monotone, appeared as "3 Minutes Happiness" on his 2005 *Blitzkrieg Pop*.) When Juillerat announced that she had a completed album ready—redone heavily with vocals after her work on "Army of Me"—Shitkatapult jumped to release it.

As Juillerat preps for her first-ever live performances in support of the album, *Soliloquy* appears as a personal testament to the road long traveled. "I picked the title to evoke my solitary musical work, because that was so important for me," she says. "It's the first time I've worked alone. I can't help asking myself a lot of questions all the time. I wanted to make something intimate, which could make the listener ask some questions, too."

*Soliloquy* is out now on Shitkatapult. [www.shitkatapult.com](http://www.shitkatapult.com)



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Just ask **Gareth Farry**, label manager for Sugarlicks Records. “The mix of cultures [in Auckland] is global but the underlying sense is that the Pacific speaks through the music,” he says. While Farry may be referring to acts on his own label, like **Jah’licious** and **Seva Hi-Fi**, his characterization fits the entire scene, where hip-hop, broken beat, and future jazz have found an audience alongside house and drum & bass.

Auckland-born **Nathan Haines** found fame playing in London, but he’s back home at the moment, living “sand-side” on Thorne Bay and enjoying “liberal parking restrictions and playing gigs at vineyards.” The sax and flute player says his favorite live venue is **Leigh Sawmill Café**; an hour north of the city, it’s run by “two of the loveliest brothers you could ever meet and situated in paradise.” Downtown, Haines frequents **El Paraiso**, located beneath the Show Girls strip joint. His favorite homegrown talent includes the band **Opensouls**, “local legend”

**Manuel Bundy** for hip-hop-based jazziness, house/Latin DJ **Dan Clarke**, and “bruk” DJ **Chris Cox**, who recently returned from West London.

As for record shopping, you might find Haines at **Conch** on High Street, which is also a haunt of **Andy “Submariner” Morton**, a DJ who New Zealand ex-pat Mark de Clive-Lowe calls “the best hip-hop producer NZ has ever seen.” Morton is a partner in local label **Can’t Stop Music**. The label just released Tha Feelstyle’s *Break It To Pieces*—“a hip-hop portrait of life down here from a Samoan perspective”—and he points out that Auckland is home to the largest Polynesian population in the world. Morton digs club nights at **Khuja Lounge**, **420**, and the **Rising Sun**, but it’s clear that good parties are only part of Auckland’s attraction for him. “What keeps me here is the lifestyle,” he says. “I can go for a bush walk or a swim in the day, and be out listening to the latest tunes at night. Musically, New Zealand is a really hip place, especially considering how small the population is.” *Peter Nicholson*

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# BELONG

A NEW ORLEANS DUO HOLDS A MIRROR UP TO THEIR BELOVED HOMETOWN.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD PHOTO: CHRIS GEORGE

Though Michael Jones and Jason Mark (the duo known as Belong) finished their debut album, *October Language*, a year before Hurricane Katrina hit, they can still hear parallels between the New Orleans of the aftermath and the record's sprawling waves of guitar and synth noise, which often threaten to swallow the listener whole. "I agree [that] a fellow New Orleans person can listen to it and be affected [knowing it was] created by people who live in New Orleans," Mark says.

In reality, it wasn't too long ago that there were blue tarps covering nearly every damaged rooftop and FEMA trailers parked all over the New Orleans suburb where Jones and Mark record. The pair initially met through a mutual friend while hanging out at a bar. Mark (who also records as Turk Dietrich) is a seasoned electronic music producer who works with Telefon Tel Aviv's Joshua Eustis in the group Benelli, while Jones is frank about his more minimal resume. "I was in a bunch of bands that never made it out of practice rooms," he reveals. "Every band I was in always broke up."

According to Jones, Belong's early work was "a lot more noisy and dronier," but the duo eventually added melodies and basic chord changes into the ether they created from digitally manipulated guitar, synths, and Mellotron flutes. Listening to *October Language*, one

imagines sunlight cracking the sky and burning away the ice across the concrete. Jones recommends listening to the record, as one of his friends does, while watching a TV with bad reception. "[Listening to us] is like staring at a fractured old picture and trying to make sense out of it," clarifies Mark. "You know that there is a pretty image there but it takes a little while to see [it]."

Belong left New Orleans for Atlanta by the time Katrina hit their home. "We thought we would be briefly there and then come home," Mark explains. "But every day, it got worse and worse—we were in a complete daze; we couldn't communicate well with each other. It was the weirdest week of my life." He talks about traveling through the eastern part of the city a few weeks after the storm passed. "It was probably one of the eeriest things I've seen in my life," he says, recalling the sight of a five-mile-long waterline.

Despite its New Orleans origins, Jones hopes listeners don't consider *October* a Katrina-inspired album. "We're making sad, but *hopeful* music," Jones explains. Mark chimes in: "There is a degree of melancholy but with a light at the end of the tunnel."

Belong's *October Language* is out now on Carpark. [www.carparkrecords.com](http://www.carparkrecords.com)

Belong: Jason Mark and Michael Jones

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# J\*DAVEY

AN L.A. DUO EMBARKS ON A 2006 SPACE-FUNK ODYSSEY.

WORDS: RICO "SUPERBIZZEE" WASHINGTON PHOTO: PETER GRAHAM

At an undisclosed location on the left coast, a makeshift craft fashioned with MicroKorgs, MPCs, and an endless cavalcade of blinking LED outboard gear has impacted Earth with the force of an atomic bomb. After years of intercepting radio waves from US hip-hop/R&B stations, its inhabitants have arrived to tweak the algorithms of urban music. Light years ahead of the curve and devoid of factory presets, the result is a new sound that references Parliament/Funkadelic, Kraftwerk, Vanity 6, and Soft Cell all in the same breath. At least, that's the fantasy that J\*Davey's newest song, "Touchit," illustrates.

J\*Davey's first forays into uncharted sound weren't exactly encouraged. "We finished 'Mr. Mister' and we were so amped about it," recalls lead vocalist Miss Jack Davey of their first endeavor. "We called some people into the studio

to listen, and the response was blank faces and crickets." Whether it was the fact that the song clocked in at a hyper 140 BPMs or that the subsequent video featured Miss Davey getting hot and heavy with a crash test dummy, "Mr. Mister" was definitely the genesis of something different. "It was pretty revolutionary for us because it didn't sound like anything *we'd* ever heard before," concurs Davey. "We didn't even know we were capable of pulling that off."

Full of warbling synths, salacious prose, and angular rhythms, the J\*Davey sound is as brazen a statement as Grace Jones crashing a ceremony at the Vatican. But bucking urban music archetypes inevitably subjected them to hating. "We got so much criticism," Davey says. "'It's too dark,' 'It's not structured right,' 'It's not a real song,' 'Where's the hook?'" Some years later, it seems these same haters are remixing; J\*Davey bootlegs—bangers featuring the sleazy "Private Parts" and the electro/New Wave romp "Division Of Joy"—are getting major burn on the iPods of the most notable leftfield urban music heads. "I've had situations where some of those same people that had mad criticism came back to me and said that our shit is classic," says beatsmith Brook D'Leau. "And that's hard to take from fickle people that really didn't understand it from the get-go."

The get-go is L.A. circa 1999, when the duo began collaborating on tunes in D'Leau's father's recording studio. "I was an MC back then," Davey remembers. "We made a crazy transition where I started singing more and my singing voice just took its own character." Now after six years of fine-tuning their craft, dazzling crowds at last year's CMJ, and doing shows with the likes of ?uestlove and The Roots, J\*Davey is ready to do the damn thing. And if you think the tremors were dope, wait 'til you experience the full-on quake. "The songs that are circulating now are from when we first started," reminds D'Leau. "People tend to judge off the first things they hear," chides Davey. "But y'all ain't heard shit yet."

[www.jdaveybaby.com](http://www.jdaveybaby.com)

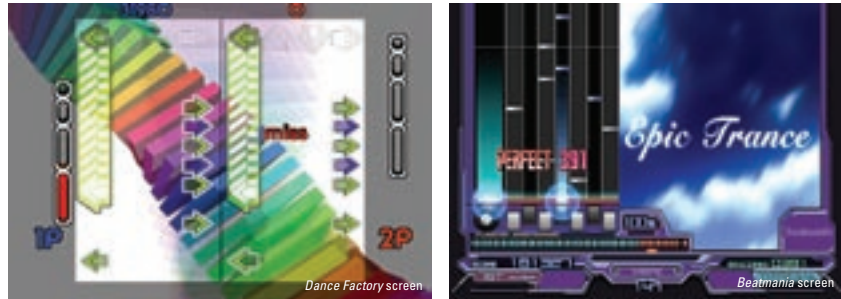
J\*Davey: Brook D'Leau and Jack Davey



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## PLAYING ALONG

Two new music videogames test your techno mettle

So your dreams of being a music-video choreographer or hot DJ/producer have been crushed by the reality of pushing papers around inside a tiny cubicle. Well, weekend warrior, that's what these new videogames are for. Like *Dance Dance Revolution*, **Dance Factory** (Codemasters; PS2/\$39.99) is a mat-based game where you high-step and booty bounce in time to the console's predetermined dance steps. Built-in calorie counter aside, the real twist to *Dance Factory* is that it makes up a choreographed routine to any music you feed it—gaber obviously generates the crazed footwork of a squirrel on crack, while Sonic Youth is good for stoking an interpretive dance session. A party game if we've ever seen one. Rather less exciting is **Beatmania** (Konami; PS2/\$64.99), which bills itself as the "first DJ simulation" for the Playstation 2. Bundled with a purpose-made controller—a box with a miniature turntable and seven white keys—the object is to push the buttons and scratch on time with flashing lights on screen. You're not allowed to make your own compositions—and the faux turntable only mimics one kind of scratch—but if your idea of fun is honing your hand-eye coordination to anonymously-produced epic trance songs, then who are we to stop you? *Tyra Bangs*  
[www.codemasters.com](http://www.codemasters.com), [www.konami.com](http://www.konami.com)



J Dilla (photo by B+)

## REQUIEM FOR A HIP-HOP HEAVYWEIGHT

Producer/MC J Dilla passes away at 32

On February 10, 2006, producer/MC J Dilla (a.k.a. Jay Dee; b. James Yancey) died of an incurable blood disease, succumbing to a three-year bout with the illness. A founding member of Detroit's Slum Village (with whom he worked from 1988 until 2001), Dilla was one of hip-hop's most talented and sought-after producers, having crafted beats for everyone from A Tribe Called Quest to D'Angelo. He was recognized for his minimal, soulful, arrhythmic beat-making style, and is said to have created the "rushed-snare" sound, so prevalent on his early recordings and his debut solo album, 2001's *Welcome 2 Detroit* (BBE) recorded under the Jay Dee moniker.

Though Dilla frequently worked with the industry's biggest names, he always kept a keen eye on the underground, and with friends like Frank-N-Dank, Madlib, Phat Kat, Talib Kweli, and Dabrye, he produced some of his most stellar work. On his 32nd birthday, just three days before his death, he released *Donuts* (Stones Throw), a full-length CD of instrumentals made on portable recording gear during a hospital stay in his adopted city of Los Angeles.

With his quiet, understated demeanor and an extremely dedicated work ethic, Dilla kept producing tracks right up until the end. After his death, his manager, Tim Raynor, told MTV.com that Dilla had finished recording enough material for two posthumous albums, *The Shining* (slated for a June 2006 release on BBE) and *Jay Love Japan* (to be released on Operation Unknown).

RIP J Dilla 1974-2006



## TOURÉ GUIDE

A Brooklyn writer maps a different route through hip-hop

Touré, the single-named author of **Never Drank the Kool-Aid** (Picador; softcover, \$15), doesn't have a problem getting close to his interview subjects; he gathers tales over games of hoops with Prince and Wynton Marsalis and proves that proximity is everything when it comes to getting to the core of stars' psyches. Fired from his internship at *Rolling Stone* for delegating legwork to other interns while he chatted up the staff (he was hired back on as a writer and

contributing editor years later), Touré deconstructs every inch of the pop culture sphere. Although *Kool-Aid* compiles his works from the *New York Times*, the *Village Voice*, *Playboy*, and other highbrow pubs, Touré's approach isn't so much that of a journalist as an essayist—he expounds on far-flung topics while bringing in his own worldview and personal anecdotes. In "Are Gay Rappers Too Real for Hip-hop?," a *Times* piece on rapper Caushun (from Kimora Lee Simmons' Baby Phat label), Touré flips the script on how we've come to define hip-hop star. (Caushun is a 25-year-old celeb hairstylist by day, and hip-hop's "homosexual Jackie Robinson" by night.) It gets even weirder when he dissects the career of Simmons' husband, Def Jam kingpin Russell, following his maturation from sexual playboy to positive-message purveyor and hip-hop mogul. *Ken Taylor*  
[www.tourea.com](http://www.tourea.com)

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# SHADOWHUNTAZ

A TRANS-NATIONAL CREW MELTS ELECTRONIC BEATS AND HIP-HOP TO DEADLY EFFECT.

WORDS: ESTHER PARK ILLUSTRATION: JAY GUILLERMO

The *Parabuthus transvaalicus*, responsible for five percent of all deaths in North Africa, is considered the deadliest of the entire scorpion species. Their tactic: to move in stealth and attack in darkness. Their victims never see them coming until it's too late. Revered and feared, they are mystical predators of legend, known as "shadow hunters."

Then there's Breafe, Nongenetic, and Dream—three battle MCs spitting lyrical venom at unsuspecting bystanders within listening distance. Reppin' America, Shadowhuntaz is a national affair, with Breafe residing in Chicago, Dream in Atlanta, and Nongenetic in LA. Though their only form of communication is via broadband and Nextel, distance hasn't kept them from causing an underground ruckus worldwide with their unpredictable style. Lyrically, they string words and thoughts together like poetic freedom fighters staging their final war cry. Meanwhile, their music pushes the boundar-

ies of electronic music and hip-hop, and they recruit new collaborators who long to pit their rhymes against the funkier of basslines.

The group came about by "simple luck," says Non. "Breafe approached me on the streets here in LA and asked me if I made beats. That was in '96. Then he moved, brought Dream in; we got along from jump and things fell in line." In late '97, the crew cut a 12" that got the attention of LA electronic label Plug Research. The label gave the group considerable exposure (and popularity) in Europe, which attracted the ears of Manchester's Skam Records. Skam released Shadowhuntaz's critically acclaimed debut, *Corrupt Data*, in January 2004, and its follow-up, *Valley of the Shadow*, last year; both were produced in collaboration with Dutch electronic outfit Funckarma.

"We are all from an age in hip-hop where doing things differently [gets] you attention in Europe," states Non. "Nothing wrong with hip-hop in the US, but people here don't really dig

[us]—[we're] too weird." Weird indeed. Once scouted by Def Jam South, the label considered signing Shadowhuntaz if they could prove that they sold 5,000 units. "We didn't, so that was that!" says Non.

"We like to do things that are risky to release," he continues. "What we do is underground lyrics on IDM [tracks] and we're cool with that. I mean, to this day, we don't know nothing about electronic music—we're hip-hop heads but we know what we like."

When asked if the Shadowhuntaz plan on being electronic music's ambassadors to hip-hop, Non demurs. "This is a task we dare not to take on, but to just be ready when it breaks is enough for now," he says. "We are having a ball doing what we do now. Three deep inner-city kids getting to travel the world and influence kids in other cultures is dope enough."

Shadowhuntaz's *Valley of the Shadow* is out now on Skam Records. [www.shadowhuntaz.com](http://www.shadowhuntaz.com), [www.skam.co.uk](http://www.skam.co.uk)

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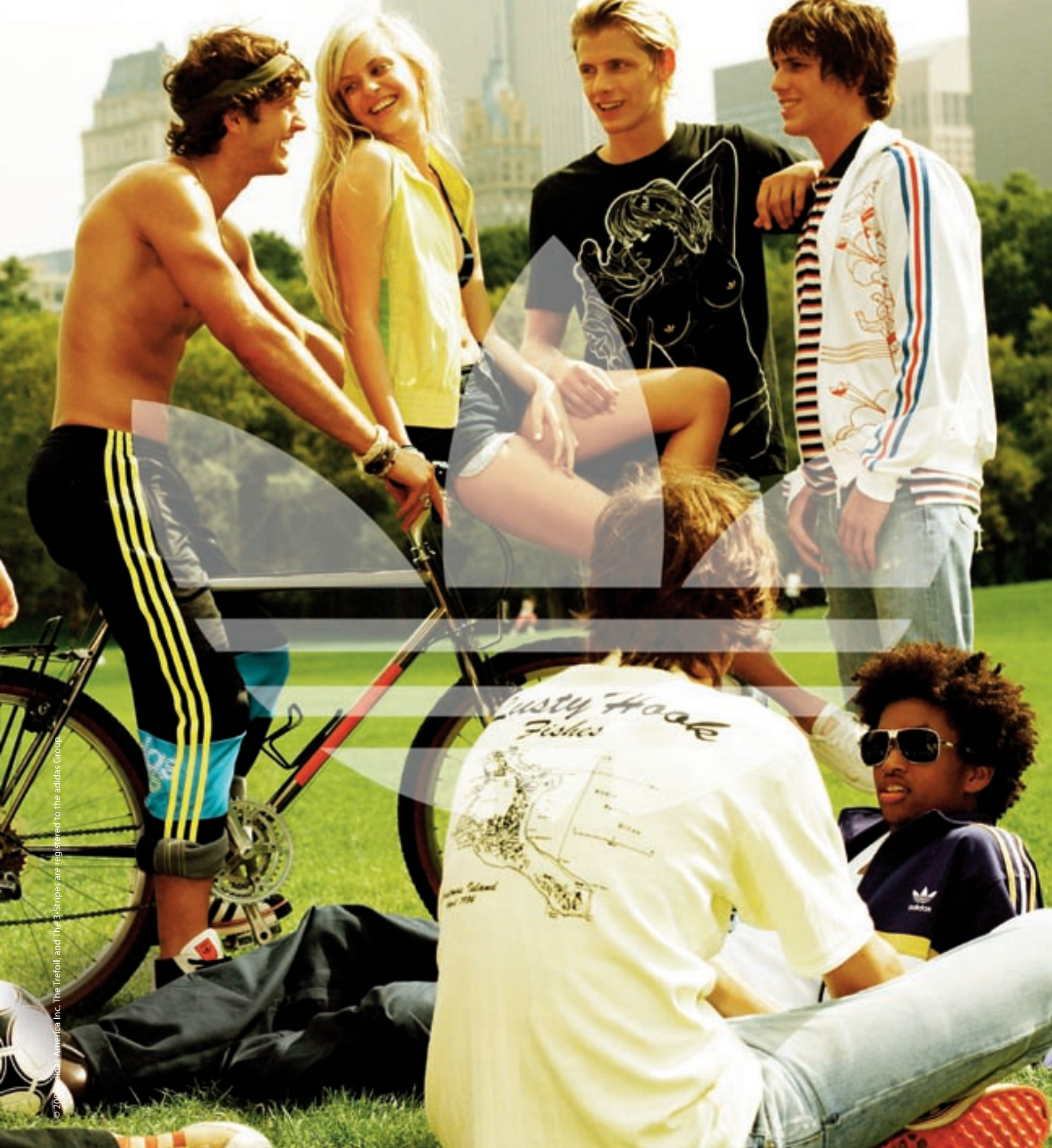
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## GOOD STUFF

A few of Magic Pony's favorite things

In 2002, Kristin Weckworth and Steve Cober started their own fantasyland called Magic Pony. The storefront/art gallery—located on Queen Street in Toronto, Canada—stocks the cutest things on the planet, from Yoshitomo Nara sticker sets to Pete Fowler's Monsterism rings to Marcel Dzama's Sad Ghost salt 'n' pepper shakers. Magic Pony also hosts monthly shows, introducing the newest work from the likes of Kozyndan, Nathan Jurevicius, and Dalek. We caught the globetrotting Pony duo on their way home from Toy Con in New York, and they told us what's floating their boat. *Tyra Bangs*  
www.magic-pony.com

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Sean Connolly/Oakland Tribune

## THE ULTIMATE CRATE DIGGER

Hip-hop aficionado Oliver Wang goes soul searching

San Francisco writer/DJ Oliver Wang has always had his taste-making hands in every pot on the stove—from contributing to NPR and *Vibe* to maintaining blogs for MSN, Napster, and his own critically vaunted Soul Sides audioblog—so it was only a matter of time before he got into the compilation-curating game. Wang culled down a list of 50 dust-covered soul gems to arrive at the 14 beautiful slabs on his first compilation, *Soul Sides Volume One*. Here he tells *XLR8R* about some of the jams that made the cut—and one that got away. *Ken Taylor*  
[www.soul-sides.com](http://www.soul-sides.com), [www.o-dub.com](http://www.o-dub.com), [www.zealousrecords.com](http://www.zealousrecords.com)

**CHARLES MAY AND ANNETTE MAY THOMAS “KEEP MY BABY WARM”** “I originally found this on 45 at Rooky Ricardo’s in San Francisco and was just blown away by how beautifully the song blended gospel, soul, and funk. It took me years to track down the album.”

**ERMA FRANKLIN “PIECE OF MY HEART”** “It kills me that so many people think Erma covered Janis Joplin when it’s the other way around. Erma never had the fame her sister Aretha enjoyed, and it’s a bitter truth that Joplin blew this song up better than Erma [but] I’m glad we got it on here so we could set the record straight.”

**LINDA LYNELLE “WHAT A MAN”** “An old friend, Georges Sulmers, was spinning in a small bar in Brooklyn and threw this song on. I recognized it from the Salt ‘N’ Pepa remake but was instantly charmed by the original. I recently had a chance to interview Lyndell—despite a 25-year hiatus, she is now back making music.”

**AL GREEN “STRONG AS DEATH (SWEET AS LOVE)”** “This 7-inch-only song was recorded right before Green’s ‘Belle’ era and it’s one of the most amazing tracks from his years at Hi. So soulful it’s searing but, for whatever reason, it never made any album. We were ready to put this on the comp but it turned out to be too expensive.”

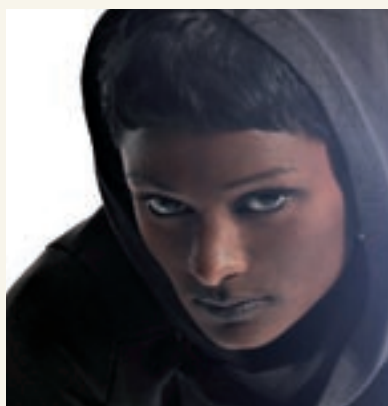
## YOU BETTER ASK SOMEBODY

*XLR8R* wonders: “What song was playing during your first make-out session?”



**JIMMY EDGAR**

“I was at the skating rink in Detroit, making out and going up this girl’s shirt to Lisa Lisa and the Cult Jam’s ‘I Wonder If I Take You Home.’”  
 Jimmy Edgar’s *Color Strip* (Warp) is out now.  
[www.jimmyedgar.com](http://www.jimmyedgar.com), [www.warprecords.com](http://www.warprecords.com)



**SASHA PERERA (JAHCOOZI)**

“I spent my early teens snogging random people in crap clubs near Leicester Square [in London]. I used to go out with my sister and my cousins, and Chaka Demus and Pliers’ ‘Tease Me’ was like a mating call for us.”  
 Jahcoozi’s *Pure Breed Mongrel* (Kitty-Yo) is out now.  
[www.jahcoozi.com](http://www.jahcoozi.com)



**MC LARS**

“Marilyn Manson’s cover of ‘Sweet Dreams’ by Eurythmics. I was visiting my friend who lived in San Diego the summer after seventh grade. We were on her waterbed and her parents were in the other room.”  
 MC Lars’ *The Graduate* (Horris) is out now.  
[www.mclars.com](http://www.mclars.com)



## FALLING PREY

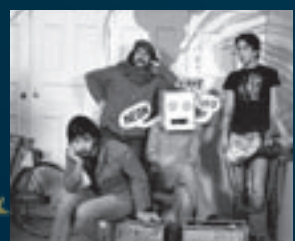
*XLR8R*’s guide to running with the wolves.

It has come to *XLR8R*’s attention that packs of roving synth- and guitar-armed wolves are attacking every facet of modern music—and they must be stopped. Sure you’re familiar with Guitar Wolf, Steppenwolf, Superwolf, Wolfie, and Peanut Butter Wolf, but have you been bitten by the razor-sharp teeth of We Are Wolves or Wolf Eyes? Been infected by the rabid AIDS Wolf? We’re here to clue you in to the new substrains of the ravenous species, and make your next trip into the woods a safe one. Tip #1: Avoid Australia. Tip #2: Stay the hell away from Montreal. *Ken Taylor*



**WOLF AND CUB**

**Natural habitat:** Adelaide, Australia  
**Last howl:** *Steal Their Gold* EP (4AD)  
**Mating call:** Post-punky blues with plenty of frenetic stop-starts, yelps, and screaming guitars; a little bit wolf, a little bit cub  
**Runs with the pack:** The Hives, White Stripes, James Chance  
[www.wolfandcub.com](http://www.wolfandcub.com)



**WOLF PARADE**

**Natural habitat:** Montreal, Quebec  
**Last howl:** *Apologies to the Queen Mary* (Sub Pop)  
**Mating call:** Tune-driven, heart-on-sleeve pop with thunderous drums and tasty organ flourishes  
**Runs with the pack:** Arcade Fire, Lou Reed, Bright Eyes  
[www.myspace.com/wolfparade](http://www.myspace.com/wolfparade)



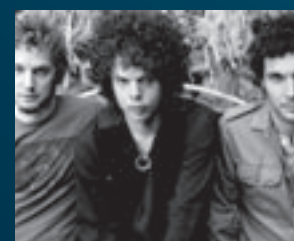
**WOLF EYES**

**Natural habitat:** Ypsilanti, MI  
**Last howl:** *Burned Mind* (Sub Pop)  
**Mating call:** Post-techno junktronica; like wolves running wild through Circuit City  
**Runs with the pack:** Norwegian death metal, Throbbing Gristle, Sonic Youth  
[www.wolfeyes.com](http://www.wolfeyes.com)



**WE ARE WOLVES**

**Natural habitat:** Montreal, Quebec  
**Last howl:** *Non-Stop Je Te Plie En Deux* (Fat Possum)  
**Mating call:** Electro-informed, punk rock skronk to soundtrack rabbit hunts through the forest  
**Runs with the pack:** Suicide, Quintron, Death From Above 1979  
[www.wearewolves.net](http://www.wearewolves.net)



**WOLFMOTHER**

**Natural habitat:** Sydney, Australia  
**Last howl:** *Wolfmother* (Modular/Interscope)  
**Mating call:** These wolves attack the liquor cabinet first with sexed-up vocals, pounding drums, and ear-splitting guitars  
**Runs with the pack:** Led Zeppelin, The Stooges, Mooney Suzuki  
[www.wolfmother.com](http://www.wolfmother.com)



**AIDS WOLF**

**Natural habitat:** Montreal, Quebec  
**Last howl:** *The Lovvers LP* (Lovepump United)  
**Mating call:** Feedback, banshee wails, and military test-tone generators draw in AIDS Wolf’s prey  
**Runs with the pack:** Les Georges Leningrad, Wolf Eyes, DMBQ  
[www.myspace.com/aidswolf](http://www.myspace.com/aidswolf)





determined sound effects. But I keep the application of electronic equipment to a minimum—I think the contribution of real musicians is fundamental to my productions.”

It is this unique approach to the jazz sound that makes his latest album, *The Latin Kick*, so progressive. The first single, “Gods of the Yoruba,” has sold well from Amsterdam to San Francisco, appealing to house heads and jazz enthusiasts alike. Originally written by jazz composer Horace Silver, “Gods” gets reworked for the dancefloor with live Afro-bossa drumming and a full horn section—all underscored by Frisina’s trademark thumping house beat.

In the 20-plus years that Frisina has been making music, he’s released two compilations, three full-lengths, and numerous singles and remixes, but in the last few years things have really kicked into high gear. His remix work for the likes of Sun Ra, Dizzy Gillespie (for the Verve label’s *Impulsive* project), and labelmate Nicola Conte have given him increasing notoriety in nu-jazz and broken beat circles, with tastemakers Gilles Peterson, Danny Krivit, and Jeff Mills playing his tunes. His popularity only looks to increase later this year, when Schema will release *Treated Notes*, a compilation of Frisina remixes, and the third volume of his *Metti Una Bossa a Cenna* series.

Not surprisingly, Frisina’s talent for combining sounds and rhythms has also led to a healthy international DJ career. But don’t expect to hear wildly futurist sounds from this archivist. “I love to mingle music of the moment with music from the past,” he says. “But even when choosing new records to play, I select productions that are connected to the past.”

Gerardo Frisina remixes of Rosalia De Souza and Marcos Valle’s “Que Bandeira” and S-Tone Inc.’s “Hanging on the Moon” are out now on Schema. www.ishtar.it

# GERARDO FRISINA

AN ITALIAN MUSIC FIEND LAUNCHES LATIN JAZZ INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

WORDS: JOSHUA P. FERGUSON ILLUSTRATION: TROPHY

“Saying that I’m a living music encyclopedia is an exaggeration,” stresses Gerardo Frisina when asked about his wealth of music knowledge. I was not in a position to argue—Frisina does not speak English and I was conducting my interview through a translator. Nonetheless, there’s no debating Frisina’s music smarts; they were the catalyst that led him to launch the Schema label alongside Luciano Cantone, Davide Rosa, and fellow jazz-dance heavyweight Nicola Conte. Frisina’s work at Schema has since helped shine the spotlight on the Italian jazz scene while changing the sound of Latin and traditional jazz as we know it.

Inspired by Latin, Brazilian, and African records of the past 60 years, Frisina explains his approach to making music. “I concentrate on these styles to carry out my productions,” he says. “The objective is to make the sound contextual and contemporary by the use of

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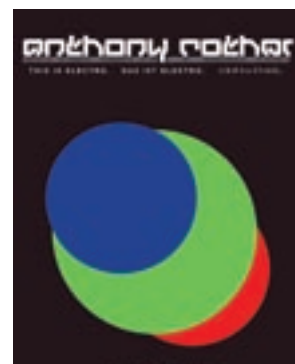
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Video stills from *The Prodigy: Their Law* (left) and *Everything Ecstatic: Films & Part 2*, DVD covers

LIVING ON VIDEO

XLR8R's Vivian Host gets down with three new music DVDs.



**Anthony Rother: This is Electro** (Datapunk, 30€) is the definitive volume for followers of the 30-year-old German producer, who has proudly hoisted the flag for true electro since Kraftwerk stopped ticking. A two-CD set collects Rother's output between 1997 and 2005; many of these 28 tracks have only previously been available on 12" vinyl, and their minimal synths, crisp 808 bass, and computerized vocals still hold up in the post-electroclash era. The DVD portion features a 10-track live set from Belgian club Fuse, where Rother barely cracks a smile once; if you're curious about what equipment he uses, it *might* interest you. More appealing is a collection of Rother's videos. The pixel world created for "Little Computer People" features raving Teletubbies and a block-headed Bart Simpson doing an ollie over a computerized Pokémon, while "Die Macht" probes *Tron* and early '90s virtual reality themes. Rother presents the future as seen by the past, but created in the present. [www.anthony-rother.com](http://www.anthony-rother.com)

Quick quiz. Four Tet's music makes people think of: a) calligraphy strokes; b) a butcher skinning a pig in a sepia-toned meatpacking house; c) a panda with a gigantic, penis-like tongue licking a man with a hot pink head? Judging by **Everything Ecstatic: Films & Part 2** (Domino, \$15.98), the visual accompaniment to Kieran Hebden's last album, the answer is "All of the above." The DVD contains 10 videos more abstract than Four Tet's songs themselves; they're a testament to nice editing and the beauty and clarity of today's digital video cameras, but not much more. ("You Were There With Me" is merely a video that Hebden shot of his girlfriend jumping around in different locations.) For the Four Tet completist, an accompanying CD features five previously unheard songs and versions. Just an average fan? Best hold out until the next project from the prolific Mr. Hebden. [www.fourtet.net](http://www.fourtet.net), [www.dominorecordco.com](http://www.dominorecordco.com)

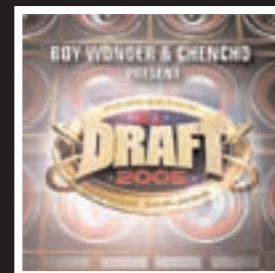
The most charming part of **The Prodigy: Their Law, The Singles 1990-2005** (XL Recordings, \$19.99) is how it follows the band from goofy teenage ravers—loose-limbed dancer Leeroy doing the running man in the streets, vocalist Keith before his transformation into the love child of John Lydon and the Toxic Avenger—into their present state as one of electronic music's most influential bands. This DVD is anchored by an incendiary 1997 live set at London's Brixton Academy (the "Firestarter" era), but die-hards will really appreciate the "behind the scenes" footage and 15 videos, including rare clips for "One Love" and "Wind It Up" and the provocative, once-banned "Smack My Bitch Up" in its entirety. Even if you're not a huge Prodigy fan, *Their Law* is a nicely done document of rave's glory days. [www.theprodigy.com](http://www.theprodigy.com), [www.xlrecordings.com](http://www.xlrecordings.com)

FASHION  
GAMES  
BOOKS

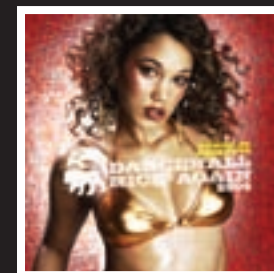


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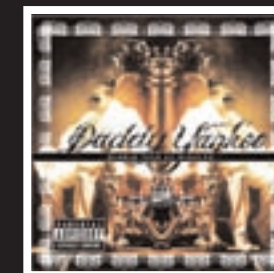
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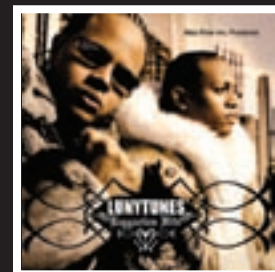
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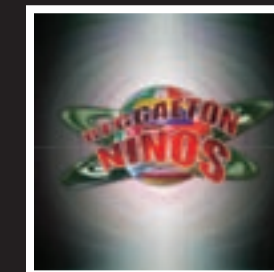
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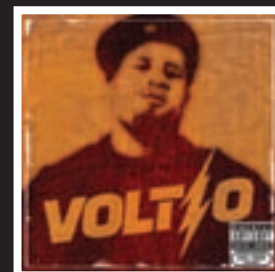
WISIN & YANDEL  
PA'L MUNDO



LOS IMMORALES  
LA TEORIA



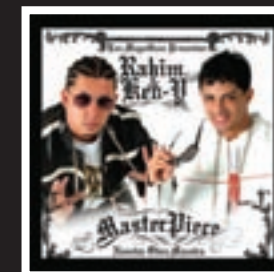
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VARIOUS ARTISTS  
REGGAETON NUMBER ONES

NEW YORK: TIMES SQUARE AND UNION SQUARE • LOS ANGELES: HOLLYWOOD & HIGHLAND AND WEST HOLLYWOOD • ORANGE • ORLANDO WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT  
SAN FRANCISCO • CHICAGO • DENVER • MIAMI • ONTARIO MILLS • ARIZONA MILLS • BOSTON  
DALLAS: MOCKINGBIRD STATION AND GRAPEVINE MILLS • SALT LAKE CITY



## SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world

This month, Pete Lawrence and Katrina Larkin of the UK's Big Chill festival will open a three-floor, 550-capacity venue in London's King Cross district called **The Big Chill House**. The pair has restored three former townhouses into a combination bar/terrace/club/restaurant. **Peter Agoston** of **Female Fun Records** is currently working on a new installment of his **Culturama** DVD series, a second **Sadat X** album (due this fall), and a book about hip-hop record labels. New York-based filmmaker and music video director David Casey is filming a documentary about long-running NYC party **Motherfucker**, with a tour planned for late 2006 and early 2007. **Through April 27**, author **Bakari Kitwana** will be participating in Rap Sessions, a 10-city national tour that explores race and hip-hop. Panelists include professor/journalist **Oliver Wang**, hip-hop photographer **Ernie Paniccioli**, and novelist **Adam Mansbach**. Visit [www.rapsessions.org](http://www.rapsessions.org) for more info. According to a New Order fan site, the BBC plans to celebrate Easter with **Manchester Passion**, an hour-long procession that will include songs by **The Smiths**, **New Order**, and **The Buzzcocks**. The parade will feature **Happy Mondays' Bez** as one of Christ's disciples, and conclude with Jesus and Pontius Pilate singing Oasis' "Wonderwall." NYC fixed-gear outpost **Trackstar** has released a 2006 calendar featuring photos of **half-naked bike messengers**. Get your very own at [www.trackstarnyc.com](http://www.trackstarnyc.com). In May, Astralwerks will release new albums from **Radio 4** and **The Sleepy Jackson**. **Massive Attack** is at work on their fifth album, **Weather Underground**, which includes a collaboration with **TV on The Radio**. This month they release **Collected** (Virgin), a two-disc set of classics, rarities, and videos. After one year of touring and recording with Tamion 12 Inch's Sam Consiglio, electro outfit **Adult.** has gone back to being a duo. The second annual **Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival** will be held on June 24; last year's

free event featured performances from **Little Brother** and **Brand Nubian**. Visit [www.brooklynbodega.com](http://www.brooklynbodega.com). In March, **Thrill Jockey** released the first of a new book series that will include volumes from **Daniel Higgs** and **Thomas Campbell**. The inaugural pressing is **Hokane**, a set of visual and musical short stories from **Aki Tsuyuko**. This month, **Triple Five Soul** teams up with the **Keystone Design Union** (founded by **David Gensler** and **JB Classics' Jason Bass**) for a shoe design and art installation. The faux-crocodile, black-on-black shoe will be limited to 555 pairs. The installation, themed around the concept of omerta, will run through October 2006 and feature collaborative works by Gensler, **Vault49**, **Aerosyn-Lex Mestrovic**, and sometime-**XL88R** collaborators **NoPattern**, **Electric Heat**, and **Kareem Black**. Francophiles, check Parisian street culture mag **Clark** online at [www.clarkmagazine.com](http://www.clarkmagazine.com). Drum & bass producer **Dylan** is working on music for a comedy/horror movie called **Crazy Animal**. The **Bling47** camp will unleash new material from **Marvin Gaye vs. Waajeed** and **Tiombe Lockhart & Her Army of Love** this spring, with a compilation to follow in May and vocalist **Invincible's** record due out in fall. Visit [www.bling47.com](http://www.bling47.com) for the latest. For the cheddar-challenged, **Jeff Chang's** critically lauded hip-hop history **Can't Stop, Won't Stop** is now out in paperback from Picador. **Diplo** recently started his own label, **Mad Decent**, which will be releasing a full-length from carioca funk-inspired act **Bonde Do Role**, plus a 12" with **Vybz Kartel**, **Macka Diamond**, and **Turbulence** (among others) chatting over a new Diplo riddim. He's also got a second installment of his **Piracy Funds Terrorism** mixtape with **M.I.A.** due out later this year. **Scion** just released new promotional CDs in conjunction with **Mr. Scruff** and Dutch producer **Nicolay**; they will be available at promotional events around the country. Kill time constructively: visit awesome photo blog [www.thundercut.com](http://www.thundercut.com).

1. Motherfucker promoters Johnny T, Justine D, Michael T, Georgie Seville; 2. Brooklyn Hip-Hop Festival; 3. New Order; 4. Adult.; 5. The Big Chill House; 6. TV on The Radio; 7. Bez from Happy Mondays

# GRIFFIN

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# TELL ME WHEN TO BLOW

If Bay Area legend E-40 has his way, the whole damn world will get hyphy.

WORDS: ROSS VIATOR PHOTOS: JONATHAN MANNION

When I finally catch up with E-40 after two weeks of phone tag, rescheduled appointments, and missed connections, the first thing he does is apologize. “I ain’t had time to crack a sunflower seed,” he offers. It’s a memorable turn of phrase that makes me laugh out loud (and remind myself to use it early and often). His timing is dead-on; the delivery is perfect, effortless. But that’s just the way Earl Stevens talks.

His down-to-earth demeanor cuts through all the celebrity bullshit; he is at once engaging, polite, charismatic, and hilarious. To fans of his music, this should come as no surprise. The self-appointed Ambassador of the Bay has the uncanny ability to tell a story in song and make you feel as if you’re being addressed directly. With his new album, he hopes to address a lot of new fans directly.

Released on the Vallejo, California native’s own Sick Wid It Records (in conjunction with BME/Reprise), *My Ghetto Report Card* could be the first Bay Area rap album in years to make a splash on a national level, but the Ambassador knows that it won’t be easy. “I can’t [blow up the Bay] by myself,” he says. “I can only give it a jumpstart, but we need the battery to be fully charged. It’s not gonna be a cakewalk—we walkin’ on hypodermic needles right now.”

#### STRAIGHT FROM THE SOIL

If anyone is willing to put in the work needed to make this happen, it’s 40. He’s at the forefront of the Bay’s hyphy movement, characterized by up-tempo tracks, convulsive dancing, and sideshows, where passengers hang out of the doors of muscle cars as they figure-eight through intersections. From album to album, he consistently pushes himself, developing new slang and honing his lyrical techniques. When asked what sets the new album apart from past efforts, he replies, “It’s me mastering my craft—bein’ able to still keep my same start-stop-and-go-scoot-type delivery, but also makin’ it to where you can adapt to it quicker than before. I feel it’s my best lyrical display to date. I’m just spittin’ lug after lug. The album’s blappin’.”

The bulk of *My Ghetto Report Card*’s production is shared by crunk heavyweight Lil Jon and super-producer Rick Rock (who proclaims himself the “Northern Cali King of the Slappers”), but there are also tracks from Bay Area veterans like Bosko and



**“UNDERGROUND, TO ME, MEANS INDEPENDENT ARTISTS THAT SPIT THAT SOIL SHIT.”**



## MAKIN' POPPA PROUD

Earl Stevens, Jr. (a.k.a. Droop-E) proves that the fruit doesn't fall far from the 40.

While most high school seniors are trying to decide on a major, E-40's son Droop-E is doing things in a major way. Born into the Bay's First Family of Rap, he's been soaking up game since he was—to use his father's term—“just a young moustache.” In addition to rhyming alongside cousins B-Slimm and Turf Talk, as part of Kabinet Gang, he's been producing slumpers for everyone from Mistah F.A.B. to Messy Marv and, of course, his dad—an impressive resume for someone who has only been making beats for three years.

But college is still part of his master plan. “I was gonna major in business, but I'm over-thinking things,” says Droop. “I'm thinking about audio-video engineering so I can enhance my music even more. I pretty much know the business side of the game—it'd be almost pointless for me to go study for something that I could learn at home or from the rest of my family.”

He's definitely made the most of the resources around him. While super-producer Rick Rock didn't teach him all he knows, he continues to play an important role in Droop-E's development. “Whenever a producer would come over to the house, I'd just soak up what they do. Like Rick Rock, he showed me little things on the MPC, but more than anything, he taught me the business side of production. He is definitely an influence.”

And what advice does Earl Senior give Earl Junior? “I just tell him to stay grittin', stay creative, and take this seriously,” says 40. “I feel that it's an occupation. Droop-E can rap real good, too, but I think that producers get paid more than rappers. They stay in the background and it's less of a risk than being a rapper, 'cause hate can come outta nowhere.”

Kabinet Gang's first full-length album is scheduled to drop April 4th, just in time for graduation.

Studio Ton, as well as one of the Bay's hottest young producers: E-40's 18-year-old son Droop-E [see sidebar]. There are cameos from across the map, including Houston's UGK and Mike Jones, and Dipset's Juelz Santana. The album's lead single, “Tell Me When To Go,” finds 40 paired with Oakland's gravel-voiced MC-of-the-moment, Keak Da Sneak. The duo trades rhymes over a Lil Jon beat built around a sample from Run-DMC's “Dumb Girl.” In the first verse, 40 raps: “*I don't bump mainstream/I knock underground/All that other shit/Sugar-coated and watered down.*” But the video—an artful black-and-white montage of Oakland sideshows, East Bay Dragon bikers, and hyphy dancers—has broken through to both MTV and BET, helping 40 reach a huge audience. So what does “mainstream” mean to him?

“I'm talkin' about the people see you every day on the award shows, and I don't slap that in my trunk,” he explains. “I'm not mad—it might be a song or two I might blap from one out of every 10 artists—you know, somethin' that poke out like nipples.” To further clarify, he adds: “Underground, to me, means independent artists that spit that soil shit, the hot niggas and the up-and-coming artists like Turf Talk, San Quinn, Mac Dre, Messy Marv, Mistah F.A.B.... I'm talking about underground like UGK.”

To that end, 40 has found a way to give the underground some mainstream exposure. Up until a few years ago, radio station KMEL 106.1—the Bay Area's local Clear Channel affiliate—rarely played local artists. “To be honest, [Bay artists were] lackin' in production, and rappers had to step it up,” admits 40. “But now we got *hella* good music out there—cats done stepped they game up to the fullest.” In 2004, he met with KMEL's program director and explained that they would have to play local artists if they were to live up to their title of “The People's Station.” For his efforts, 40 was rewarded with E-Feezy Radio, a two-hour slot on Sunday afternoons that gives him the leeway to play the artists he feels deserve to be heard—and he doesn't have to look far to find many of them.

### THE FIRST FAMILY OF THE BAY

When you look at the company that 40 has kept since the beginning of his career, it quickly becomes apparent that his loyalties lie first and foremost with his family. The oldest of four children, he formed The Click in the late '80s with his sister Suga T, brother D-Shot, and cousin B-Legit. His youngest brother, Mugzi (of The Mossie), records on Sick Wid It, as do his cousins Turf Talk and Trenches, The DB'z (aka The Dirty Boyz), and B-Slimm, who makes up Kabinet Gang with 40's son Droop-E. And across town on the north side of Vallejo, his cousin Mac Mall has been putting out records since the age of 16.

But when he says, “Every rapper got a little E-40 in 'em, whether they like it or not,” he's not talking about the many branches of his talented family tree. He's referring to the fact that his inventive slang has become commonplace in the rap vernacular. Over the years, he's debuted myriad terms, not to mention nicknames for himself, including 40 Belafonte, E-Feasible, and his latest, Spittery 40 Yay (à la Sidney Poitier). The problem is that he's rarely credited for creating the slang he slings, like “It's all good.”

“I put [it's all good] out there real tough, like with 'you feel me.' All them words, that's street shit. I didn't get that from no rapper-ass nigga; it's regular street talk. I'm a street nigga—[the fans] just see the glamour part of me, they don't know I'm from the soil. I'm too laced with this game. You can't talk about the things I talk about unless you been surrounded by it.”

### THE HOOD NARRATOR

As he claims in numerous songs, “I speak for the soil,” but that doesn't mean that he partakes in all the activities he describes. Even though 40 and countless other Bay MCs tell tales of popping pills, he doesn't touch the stuff himself.

“I don't thizz [take ecstasy] and I don't condone it,” he says. “Just like Arnold Schwarzenegger don't really condone shootin' up a police station with his *Terminator* weaponry. I'm just a street narrator. We rappers. We just like directors and script writers, but we comin' from a street point of view, so we just talk about what we see, and a lot of these youngsters is on them pills.”

40 makes it abundantly clear that it's important for him to reflect what happens in his hood—in other words, to stay loyal to the soil. By doing so, he's remained relevant when most rappers his age have long since fallen off, but that's only part of the secret to his incredible longevity in a notoriously fickle genre. He also credits “stayin' prayed up, consistently puttin' music out, not bein' stuck in a time warp, and not bein' lazy,” with his success. His legendary work ethic is the inspiration behind album titles like *Grit and Grind* and *Charlie Hustle: The Blueprint of a Self-Made Millionaire*.

But it's clear that it will take more than straight talk and twisted slang to extend the Bay Bridge to the rest of the nation. It'll take an artist with E-40's talent, charisma, and focus—and it means that a lot more sunflower seeds will go uncracked.

E-40's *My Ghetto Report Card* is out now on Sick Wid It Records/BME/Reprise. [www.e-40music.com](http://www.e-40music.com)

## THAT'S MY WORD

As he states on the intro to *The Best Of E-40: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*, “The rap game stay stealin' my slang, pimp.” Here is a small sampling of E-40's ever-expanding lexicon of slanguage.

**Blaps and slaps:** Hard-hitting bass sounds, analogous to the Bay term “slumps” or “slumpers.”

**Fo' sheezy/Fo' shizzle:** The 40-fied version of “for sure,” co-opted by everyone from Snoop Dogg to soccer moms. “Me and Too Short was the first ones to say that on wax,” says Feezy.

**Gouda:** Money (as in cheese).

**It's all good/It's all gravy/It's all gravity/It's all gratifying:** “It's all good” is self-explanatory, but note the 40-rific evolution of the term.

**Pimpin':** It looks like a verb or an adjective, but it's really a noun. As 40 explains, “Pimps wasn't even callin' each other 'pimpin'”—I'm the one that got everybody sayin' that.”

**Pop your collar:** More than a decade before Jay-Z bragged about his button-ups, 40 was flossin' grown man shirts.

**Tycoon:** In 1996, on B-Legit's “Check It Out,” 40 drawled, “Ever since the womb, I been a tycoon.” He explains, “Of course, it's in the dictionary, but at the same time, street niggas wasn't callin' each other tycoon. That was just in the corporate world, like Steve Wynn and them. But I made it street.”

**With a gypsy-ness/with a hurry-up-ness:** With a quickness.

**Yay Area:** The Bay Area

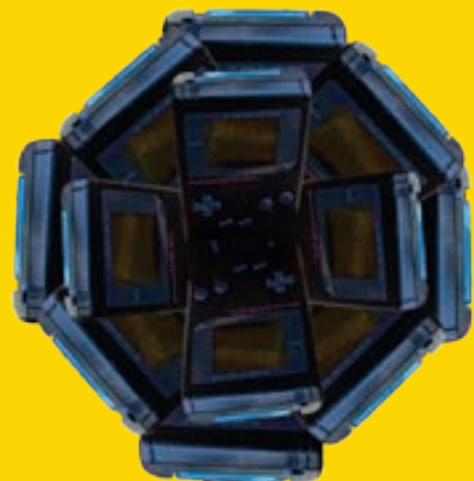
**Yaper:** Money (in keeping with the “Yay Area” theme, a Y is added to “paper.”).

**You feel me/You smell me?:** 40 slanguage for “Do you understand?”

“I'M JUST SPITTIN' LUG AFTER LUG.”







# EIGHT IS ENOUGH

8-bit punks catapult videogame music into the next millennium.

INTRO: JOSHUA "BIT SHIFTER" DAVIS

8-bit music is something of a moving target, more of a movement than a genre. Even a name can't be agreed upon—the closest to universally accepted terms are "chiptune," "micromusic," and "8-bit," but new variants are being churned out every day, with varying degrees of cleverness ("bitpop," "blip-hop," etc.).

The most identifiable common element of the 8-bit scene is an aesthetic association with the sound and style of early console and home-computer videogames, but this form can take on different guises. Some producers fixate on the unembellished output of a single four-channel, 8-bit sound chip; others meticulously reconstruct 8-bit sounds using modern equipment. Some songs overly nod to game soundtracks; others are distant descendants, exploring game music's textures but not its conventions.

Although the idiom's practitioners approach this style from every direction imaginable, low-bit music is nothing new—its lineage parallels that of home computing, stretching back more than 20 years. The current micromusic mini-movement is actually a derivation of computer-game hacking; it claims roots in mid-'80s "crack intros," where videogames were "modified" and animations, music, and codenames added to the intro screens—a nerd-world equivalent of graffiti. These embellishments became increasingly elaborate until the intros eclipsed the game as the object of interest, turning into standalone showcases of programming prowess called "demos."

This impulse to push limits continues in today's low-bit music. It has spurred the creation of homebrew programs, hardware, and techniques, making it possible to construct live, beat-driven tracks on an Atari 2600, control a Nintendo Entertainment System via MIDI, and turn a Game Boy into a portable, pocket-sized music workstation. And for all of the scene's stylistic chaos, this moment is a rare snapshot of the healthiest time in a movement's development—a free-for-all of diverse experimentation that can probably only happen in the absence of a definition.



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

It's game on for Brazilian 8-bit head Artificial.

WORDS: BRUNO NATAL PHOTO: LUCAS BORI

You probably remember the days when your parents desperately asked you to turn down the volume of the TV while you were playing Nintendo. Judging from the kind of sound Kassín extracts from a simple Game Boy with his Artificial project, you can only imagine his mother suffered a lot more than the rest.

The idea behind Artificial is simple: to make music using Game Boy's blips and beeps. Doing it is a little more complicated. Instead of turntables and a laptop, Kassín's live PA consists of two Game Boys, a MicroKorg keyboard, and two delay pedals, all plugged to a four-channel board. This lo-fi approach comes as quite a switch for Kassín, a well-known Brazilian producer who has worked with Tropicália's Caetano Veloso, Bebel Gilberto, and even Japanese pop stars.

All of Kassín's gigs as Artificial are improvised, mixing pre-recorded beats with live effects to create a rough-sounding collision of electro, Miami bass, and breakbeat. Relying on heavy electronic drum sounds, some songs gravitate loosely towards house, while others could be a bed for hip-hop lyrics or point to new possibilities for *baile* funk.

In order to access the videogame soundbank, Kassín utilizes two specially made cartridges, which transform the toy into a synthesizer and a sequencer of 8-bit beats and noise. "I read about this LSDJ program that allowed you to program a Game Boy and I bought it online," says Kassín. "When I talked about it to my partner, Berna Ceppas, I found out that he had just bought a similar one called Nanoloop."

The technical limitations of such rudimentary tools are not a problem; rather, they fit perfectly with the music's aesthetic. "Every time I feel limited by the programs, I just use something else," says Kassín. "When I'm missing some chords, I use the keyboard. It's the drums and the bass I like the most. I also use a laptop with some beats programmed in it, just in case—basically because the Game Boy has let me down a couple of times."

The laptop came in handy during 2005's Sónar festival, when his Game Boy failed. "It was great nonetheless," recalls Kassín. "I programmed the show on the plane on the way to Spain. I had a great time at these concerts. The reactions were funny, because people didn't expect me to sing in falsetto, for instance. And a lot of people danced."

Released through his own label, Ping Pong, *Free U.S.A.* captures some of this live action. An American citizen (his father is American), the idea for the record came during a trip to the United States. "I was on a US tour with my band, +2," explains Kassín. "It was just before the war [in Iraq] had begun. In Minneapolis there were flags with 'Free Iraq' written on them in front of every house. I thought this was such ignorance—comparable to the Nazis—that I recorded an album called *Free U.S.A.*"

*Free U.S.A.* is out now on Ping Pong. [www.pingpongdiscos.com](http://www.pingpongdiscos.com)

## SMACK MY BIT UP

Sacramento band 8-bit conquers the world with NES beats and ninja stars.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD

Jay-Z's "99 Problems" galloped to the tune of the *Legend of Zelda* theme before 8-bit took the floor. We were at Sacramento's Old Ironsides club. The rappers of the group 8-bit were cloaked in fashionable radioactive suits and they were swigging beer. They had an iPod running their backing tracks. And they had charm.

One felt it in their choppy rhymes, which recalled Run-DMC. It was written across rapper Le-frost's bespectacled face, which poked out of the cubbyhole of her helmet to lead a chorus of "I'm grabbing my nuts." It was distilled in catchy, fuzzy melodies and thumping beats, the kind that would be at home on any Nintendo game. Even after robots intoned "Suck my dick, bitch!" in the hook of one of their songs, the charm remained.

After the show, bandmate Robo-T asked Le-frost, "What is it that we make fun of about rap?"

"We make fun of ourselves," she replied. "That's basically it."

Parked outside the club was the group's cramped tour van. They bought it with Beck's money—well, with the money they got from last year's Ghettochip Malfunction remix of Beck's "Hell Yes." Beck's brother happened to be an 8-bit fan, and the star's manager gave them a call. The crew then laced the hip-hop original with a melody choked out of a dusty Game Boy cartridge, and found themselves in the company of Ad-Rock, Boards of Canada, and El-P on the *Guerolito* compilation.

8-bit was one of the more curious

groups to emerge from the LA underground in the early '00s. They began as a joke. Robo-T and his brother, Anti-Log, are Indiana transplants who moved to Highland Park, where they met Le-frost at a bowling alley. 8-bit first got the hang of sampling by yanking tunes and noises from NES classics like *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out*, *Rygar*, the *Zelda* games, and *Wizards and Warriors 2*. "We just grew up with Nintendo and liked the way it sounded," explains Robo-T. "We started out sampling it and putting beats on it to make our own music."

He says that his group now produces the majority of their vintage sounds from scratch. True to the NES sound, the melodies and rhythms are usually repetitive, but attention grabbing. So, too, is 8-bit's packaging. Their self-released CDs on their Ninja Star imprint are sometimes wrapped in handmade origami throwing stars.

As for their new record, *The Chrome Album*, a few 8-bit members describe it as "proggy" or hip-hop-meets-noise-rawkers Hella. "We're trying to be the Rush of rap," clarified Robo-T. Le-frost is counting on this approach being so successful that she'll be able to buy a Bentley soon; the others are more pessimistic. "Whatever we do, we'll have to do it quick because we're going to die quickly," Spacey-K said. Robo-T chimed in, "Yeah, I plan to be hanging from a rope in the next six months."

8-bit's *The Chrome Album* is out now on Ninja Star. Beck's *Gameboy Variations (Hell Yes Remix)* EP is out now on Interscope. [www.ninjastarrecords.com](http://www.ninjastarrecords.com)



8-bit performing live



## CHIPS AHOY

Online micromusic community 8bitpeoples lists their favorite 8-bit web resources.

[www.8bitpeoples.com](http://www.8bitpeoples.com)

**VORC:** [www.vorc.org](http://www.vorc.org)

The definitive news site for the videogame music (VGM) and chiptune scenes, updated daily.

**Kohina:** [www.kohina.net](http://www.kohina.net)

Fantastic streaming chiptune net radio.

**Micromusic:** [www.micromusic.net](http://www.micromusic.net)

An internet label and online community for micromusic and chiptune musicians and enthusiasts.

**High-Voltage SID Collection:** [www.hvsc.c64.org](http://www.hvsc.c64.org)

Enormous Commodore 64 music-information resource and song archive.

**2a03:** [www.2a03.org](http://www.2a03.org)

A comprehensive Nintendo Entertainment System music archive and community resource.

**Chiptune.com:** [www.chiptune.com](http://www.chiptune.com)

A huge cross-platform VGM and chiptune song repository.

**Little Sound DJ:** [www.littlesounddj.com](http://www.littlesounddj.com)

The homepage of the popular tracker for the original Nintendo Game Boy.

**Nanoloop:** [www.nanoloop.com](http://www.nanoloop.com)

The website of the music-making cartridge series for both the original Game Boy and the Game Boy Advance platforms.

**Wayfar:** [www.wayfar.net](http://www.wayfar.net)

Home of both the MIDINES custom Nintendo Entertainment System MIDI interface, and incredible NES musician, XLK.

**Qotile:** [www.qotile.net](http://www.qotile.net)

Site of Paul Slocum's homebrew programs, including Synthcart (for the Atari 2600) and Cynthcart (for the Commodore 64).



### PIXEL PATROL I Am 8-Bit finds artists paying homage to videogame history.

As in 8-bit music, the art in *I Am 8-Bit* (Chronicle; softcover, \$22.95) ranges from literal—Love Ablan's cut 'n' sew *Bubble Bobble* dolls; Plasticgod's 2D painting of the main character from *Tron*—to the figurative, and even speculative (Donkey Kong and Mario sharing beers in Bob Dob's "Cheers;" two Nintendo consoles falling in love in Jason Sho Green's "Tantric Tetris"). The central theme of this book is art inspired by '80s videogames, and 23-year-old author/curator Jon M. Gibson has assembled an impressive list of 70 contributors, including Gary Baseman, Tim Biskup, and Burlesque's Todd Bratrud and Aaron Horkey. The project started with an art show in April 2005 at Los Angeles' Gallery 1988 and grew from there. "*I Am 8-Bit* isn't so much about proving that videogames are art. They are," says Gibson, who has been writing about videogames since the age of 15. "It's more about paying tribute to the icons of a bygone era—the celebrities of gaming. Lara Croft doesn't have shit on Mario. A gelled-up 'stache and baggy, red overalls beat big tits any day of the week!" *Vivian Host*  
[www.iam8bit.net](http://www.iam8bit.net)



## HEAVY ARTILLERY 8 Bit Weapon decodes his music-making set-up. WORDS: MATT EARP

LA's Seth D. Sternberger bristles with more artillery than the dudes from *Contra*, his every piece of gear on par with the *Spread* or *Laser Guns* and not a lame *Fire Ball* in sight. Known in the burgeoning micromusic scene as 8 Bit Weapon, he's been performing live and turning out material (both original tunes and Commodore 64 covers) since 2001. Intellivision Music launched their label with his EP and a remixed re-release of the limited-edition "Vaporware Soundtracks" is available for order from his website. The ever-excitable Sternberger is busy working on a score for the Disney short *Catch Up* and a top-secret multi-platform game for Nokia, but took time to spec out his sound for us.

[www.8bitweapon.com](http://www.8bitweapon.com)

### What's your setup for playing live?

I have a series of backing tracks running off a laptop as well as some MIDI sequences. Then I perform on a sandwich of a MicroKorg vocoder, a C64 computer running Music Machine, and a C128 computer running SID [Sound Interface Device] cart 1.0.

### How do you process all that at once?

Primarily, I use a MIDI sequencer to control my 8-bit weapons, such as the MIDINES and the SIDstation. I sequence the Game Boys with LSDJ, a cart synth/sequencer combo for all Game Boys and I have an Atari 2600 that you can manually sync up to a handful of MIDI clock tempos. But it's a lot more fun to lay down a rocking drum track off the Atari synth cart and get a fat lo-fi bassline, then record it into Acid. I also now have three new weapons that use Apple computers: the Apple IIe drum machine, using a "Drum Key" Card; the Apple II (or IIc/IIe) synth sampler; and the famous "Crap-O-Phone"—it's a 2x4-looking orange controller that

allows me to play an Apple II like a guitar!

### Do you end up using certain 8-bit systems for certain parts of the music, like basslines?

The SID chip is the most dynamic audio chip ever to rock the microcomputer scene! Its digital/analog features allow it to be an incredibly versatile synthesizer. SID has great bass potential as well as amazing lead sounds and wild sound effects. It's also great for chord arpeggios, especially with a nice low-pass filter sweep! The Game Boy has great bass too, the old grey one. It also has very distinct waves. The magical thing about the NES is the triangular wave bass! The most awesome micro-bass ever!

### Are any of the instruments too delicate to leave the studio?

Yes, the SIDstation. It's been through hell and back and I can't bring myself to put a good friend like that in danger ever again.

### Is there any piece of equipment universal to most performers in the scene?

The Little Sound DJ and Nanoloop carts for Game Boy, the Synthcart for the Atari 2600, and recently the MIDINES cart.

### You seem able to make all your sounds with existing software and hardware. Is anyone doing hardcore computer hacking or modding?

gwEm made his own tracker for his Atari and my evil twin brother, FirestARTer of Germany, made his own SIDstation-like synth, a MIDI Game Boy interface device; he even made a C64 into a TB-303! My other buddy, Paul Slocum, makes his own software and hardware mods. Paul made the Synthcart for the Atari 2600 and the SID cart for the C64. He has also made a dot matrix printer synth! He is crazy!



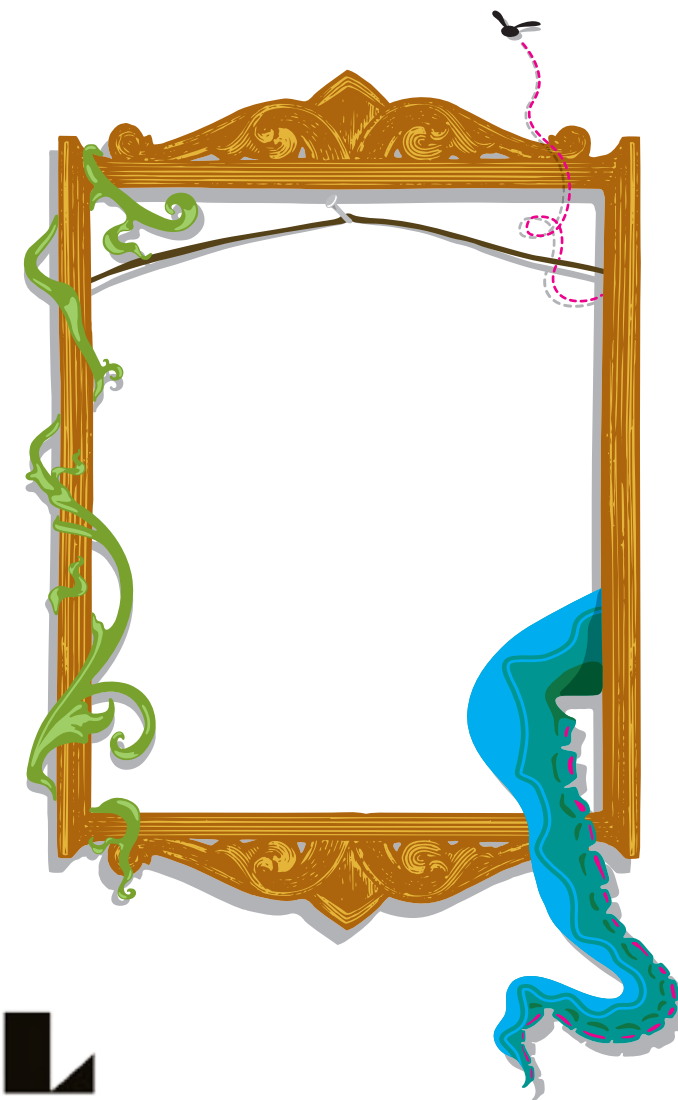
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## VITAL SIGNS

French dancefloor detonator Vitalic is on a one-man mission: to make techno rock harder than ever

WORDS: PIERS MARTIN ILLUSTRATION & LAYOUT: DUST LA ROCK

It is Wednesday, December 21, 2005. Down in Ghetto—a grimy, scarlet-walled sweatbox tucked along a narrow, piss-stained alley in London's Soho—Christmas has come early for the 300 or so revellers squeezed inside for Nag Nag Nag. This is the capital's notorious weekly polysexual electro-disco shindig, a hard 'n' fast subterranean haven for gays, goths, ravers, and freaks. Tonight the star attraction is a special live performance by French techno deity Vitalic.

### CHAMPAGNE TECHNO, CAVIAR DREAMS

The occasion is notable for a number of reasons. First, this that this is easily the most intimate gig Vitalic's Pascal Arbez has played in what has been an outrageously successful year for the 29-year-old producer. The demand for his searing live sets (he doesn't DJ) means he's now accustomed to playing to thousands at outdoor summer festivals and mega-raves in Europe and Japan. At some events, Vitalic is often the only electronic act on a rock-heavy bill, his metallic blizzard of jagged New Beat, champagne techno, and soaring melody sandwiched between, say, LCD Soundsystem and Soulwax. "I like to stand alone, by myself, on these huge stages," he says.

Secondly, Vitalic's heroic metal-disco anthems—"La Rock 01," "Poney Part 1," "You Prefer Cocaine," "My Friend Dario"—have helped to define Nag Nag Nag's full-throttle, hedonistic agenda, and that of many clubs like it across the world. Vitalic's debut, 2001's brilliant four-song *Poney* EP (International Deejay Gigolos), fast



became an electroclash touchstone, then swiftly a universal floor-filler. Today “La Rock 01,” raw and euphoric, is practically a clubland cliché. Like many of the musicians scooped up in that tidal wave of hype (Fischerspooner being the exception), Arbez coolly distanced himself from the hoopla, and let his music do the talking.

And finally, exactly 12 months ago to the day, this correspondent brought Arbez and his manager down to Nag after Vitalic had recorded what was the last ever John Peel session for BBC Radio One, an hour-long set broadcast live from the BBC’s famous Maida Vale studios. By coincidence, the DJ played Vitalic’s glistening “Fanfares” as we entered and Arbez, tall and lean, weaved across the floor towards the booth and shook the DJ’s hand. The DJ later gushed that he’d been “touched by the hand of God.”

#### ROCKING OUT

Six weeks into 2006 and Arbez is back at his home in the French countryside, just outside Dijon, having returned from his first tour of Australia as part of the roving Big Day Out package. “The parties were great,” he says in a tone that suggests otherwise. His manner can be blunt, and he doesn’t suffer fools. Self-promotion has never been his strong suit. His highlight of the festival was Iggy Pop. “I got to see [him] play

five times in a row,” he says. “I didn’t want to miss him each time. He’s really rock & roll; so powerful, he’s not faking.”

Like Daft Punk before him, much of Vitalic’s appeal lies in the way he fuses rock’s raw energy with an original and enlightened approach to techno. “Guitars” are all over his deliriously acclaimed debut, *OK Cowboy*, which took four years to complete. Gnarly riffs power “My Friend Dario,” his Iggy-referencing “No Fun,” and his Daft Punk/Green Velvet homage “New Man.” Except Arbez doesn’t own a guitar.

Rather, he meticulously generates these sounds on his synthesizer, sometimes spending days perfecting a single sound in his home studio. The queasy organ on “Polkamatic” and “Wooo,” like the military tattoo of “Valletta Fanfares,” is an artificial emulation, too. He cites Wendy Carlos’ blurring of the artificial and the authentic with her classical Moog score for *A Clockwork Orange* as an inspiration, alongside more traditional teenage influences: Laurent Garnier, Thomas Bangalter, Sparks, Giorgio Moroder, Aphex Twin, Fad Gadget, the Flemish composer Wim Mertens, Belgian New Beat. “When I do a track—not always, but often—I decide to invite people into the same room,” Arbez says. “Of course I am alone but, for example, I invite Giorgio Moroder and Daniel Miller and Daft Punk and Green

Velvet [over], you see what I mean? And I think, ‘What would they do with my music? What would they do if Vitalic was producing a track with all these guys in the back?’”

#### DIJON EASE

Though it would be more practical for travelling purposes for Arbez to be in Paris, or nearby Lyon where he studied business at university, he has lived around Dijon for most of his life. He likes feeling removed, geographically and mentally, from the French capital with all its petty distractions. Here he oversees his record label, Citizen, which releases fizzing techno by Gallic producers John Lord Fonda, Holog Spies, and Arbez’s other, rockier project, The Silures (with Linda Lamb and Mount Sims). He also takes flying lessons. He has the first part of his small aircraft pilot’s licence but he’s been so busy, touring constantly like a rock act, that he hasn’t had time to complete the 10 hours of flying necessary to earn the second half.

It was in Dijon, too, that Arbez first began making conventional techno as Dima and got involved in the local rave scene. He soon befriended The Hacker and his Goodlife crew from Grenoble, who released Dima’s finest moment, a wonderfully romantic remix of The Hacker’s “Fadin’ Away,” in 2000. The Hacker in



turn introduced Arbez’s music to Gigolo boss DJ Hell who, instantly besotted, quickly unleashed the *Poney* EP.

#### KISS OFF

Since then, Vitalic, though cautious, has not put a foot wrong. His remixes of Slam, Bjork, Basement Jaxx, and Royksopp add a marvellous new dimension to the originals, while, tellingly, no one has yet had the guts to remix Vitalic. Save for a joint remix with The Hacker of A Number Of Names’ landmark “Shari Vari,” the *Poney* EP is his sole Gigolo release. That record’s exposure, coupled with his devastating live show, precipitated a deluge of label interest; Arbez eventually signed with big indie PIAS in Europe, a French-speaking company.

Right now, Vitalic is conceivably the ultimate crossover act, a techno visionary who rocks harder than his guitar-wielding peers. The more people he plays to, the more he enchants, and his star is rapidly ascending. Why? Let Arbez have the final say. “My music [makes you] really want to kiss someone,” he says, laughing. “A French journalist once wrote about one of my live shows: ‘You don’t know why but at some moments you want to kiss someone, whoever it is.’ I think it’s a good thing. I didn’t know it myself but I want to provoke something.”

*OK Cowboy* is out now on *Uncivilized World* in the US, and PIAS elsewhere. [www.vitalic.org](http://www.vitalic.org)



## DRONE ON THE RANGE

Some highlights from Vitalic’s *OK Cowboy*

WORDS: TYRA BANGS

#### “Newman”

Wearing the influence of Belgian New Beat on its sleeve, “Newman” is what new-school industrial *should* sound like: a blistering powerhouse consisting of a whip-sharp kicks and simulated hard-rock guitars that repeatedly thrust their hips in the air. A rollercoaster ride of epic proportions.

#### “No Fun”

“No guitars, no strobes, no leather, no fun” intones the sample that starts this ironically titled slab of synth mastery. The keyboard sounds here have intense personalities: wide-mouthed drones in conversation with chattering robotic hyenas and the screeching powerdrills that eventually drive this relentless number home.

#### “U And I”

The softer (though no less club-worthy) side of Mr. Arbez, “U And I” is loop after textured loop of an aural Ecstasy trip. Distorted, unidentifiable vocals, hazy sirens, and dramatic stops and starts get buoyed with heart-rending, minor-key melodies—a recipe for hardcore dancefloor PDAs.

#### “La Rock 01”

Focused on a kick that sounds like a skin-head’s boot kicking down a door, the track really begins to escalate after minute one, when its signature motorcycle-revving synths lock into place. A marching, metronomic electroclash anthem that still holds up.



## THE SOUND & THE FURY

Brooklyn's most volatile insurgents, Liars, experience alienation, isolation, and creative freedom in the wilds of Berlin.

WORDS: FRED MIKETA IMAGES: JULIAN GROSS OF LIARS ORIGINAL PHOTOS: STEVE GULLICK

Two states of creative consciousness exist: one is a land free from the anxious oppression of doubt and fear; the other is a realm plagued by the cloudy, lingering ghosts of self doubt and uncertainty, and the crippling sensation of hesitation. When both realms collide, it creates a sonic din akin to eight million hearts pulsing, lightning repeatedly crashing into a storming ocean, and the friction of pulsating percussion. That sound is Liars.

Their new album, *Drum's Not Dead*, finds the unconventional three-piece breaking out of the pigeonhole of Williamsburg art-rock royalty. Since the release of their 2003 debut, *They Threw Us All in a Trench and Stuck a Monument on Top*, the band had already pared down from four people to three; their present line-up is singer Angus Andrew, multi-instrumentalist Julian Gross, and guitarist/drummer Aaron Hemphill. And whereas their last release, 2004's *They Were Wrong, So We Drowned*, was a meditation on magic, written in the forests of New Jersey, *Drum's Not Dead* soundtracks Liars'

recent relocation to Berlin, a move that has precipitated a redefinition of their sound while blasting all that's lifelessly predictable, one track at a time.

*Drum's Not Dead* tells the tale of two fictional characters, Drum and Mount Heart Attack. Drum represents the impulsive, creatively assertive side; Mount Heart Attack, Drum's mortal enemy, is a distressing obstacle that stands in the way of progress. It's a meditation on starting over and dealing with loss, with more structured, driving songs than on previous efforts. "The last album was really strong on the conceptual side," explains Andrew in the

## PENETRATING, HEAD-STOMPING DRUM PATTERNS, HELLFIRE DRONES, AND SINISTER, CULT-LIKE CHANTING

midst of an extensive European tour. "On this one, we didn't talk about it that much. It had no framework. We just had time to make music on our own and explore more of the personal side, rather than subject matter we agreed on beforehand."

Should this soundtrack of penetrating, head-stomping drum patterns; hellfire drones; and sinister, cult-like chanting not be enough stimulation for you, *Drum's Not Dead* also contains a DVD with "three visual versions of the album," videos that represent each member's take on every track. "As artists, we should be making albums that are more worthwhile to buy," says Andrew. "In this day and age, it requires more than just 12 songs and a slip of paper. I think we need to step up to the plate a bit more."

Mirroring the band's insistence on challenging their listeners and themselves creatively, Andrew explained that the move to Berlin became a tool for crafting an album rich with rhythmic discomfort and internal strife. "This record has a lot to do with the displacement, isolation, and alienation that you get from moving to a foreign place," recalls the articulate frontman, who grew up in Australia. "After living in America for 10 years, I started to freak out and feel like I needed to move somewhere else. There's a different political and social climate [in Germany], especially in Berlin. They're particularly adamant about not being fascists. It's a nice change from the United States."

According to Andrew, the album also represents a



release of last year's tension between bandmates. "There was a point where Aaron, our guitarist and drummer, was contemplating leaving the band somewhere in the middle of 2005 to go back to school," he recalls. "It was a tough period for both of us in terms of figuring out where we were going to go and what we were going to do. Eventually he changed his mind and got back on board and we got the album together."

Through all of the anarchic moves and dislocating struggles that have permeated Liars' past, they've let life's tumult transform them into one of the most profoundly genre-bending bands to date. "I think we're generally considered a New York band, which is fine," says Andrew. "I just think that the particular type of sound that we were categorized with early on was a little small. We've had the chance since then to show that we have other things to offer, you know?"

Yes, we know.

*Liars' Drum's Not Dead* is out now on Mute.  
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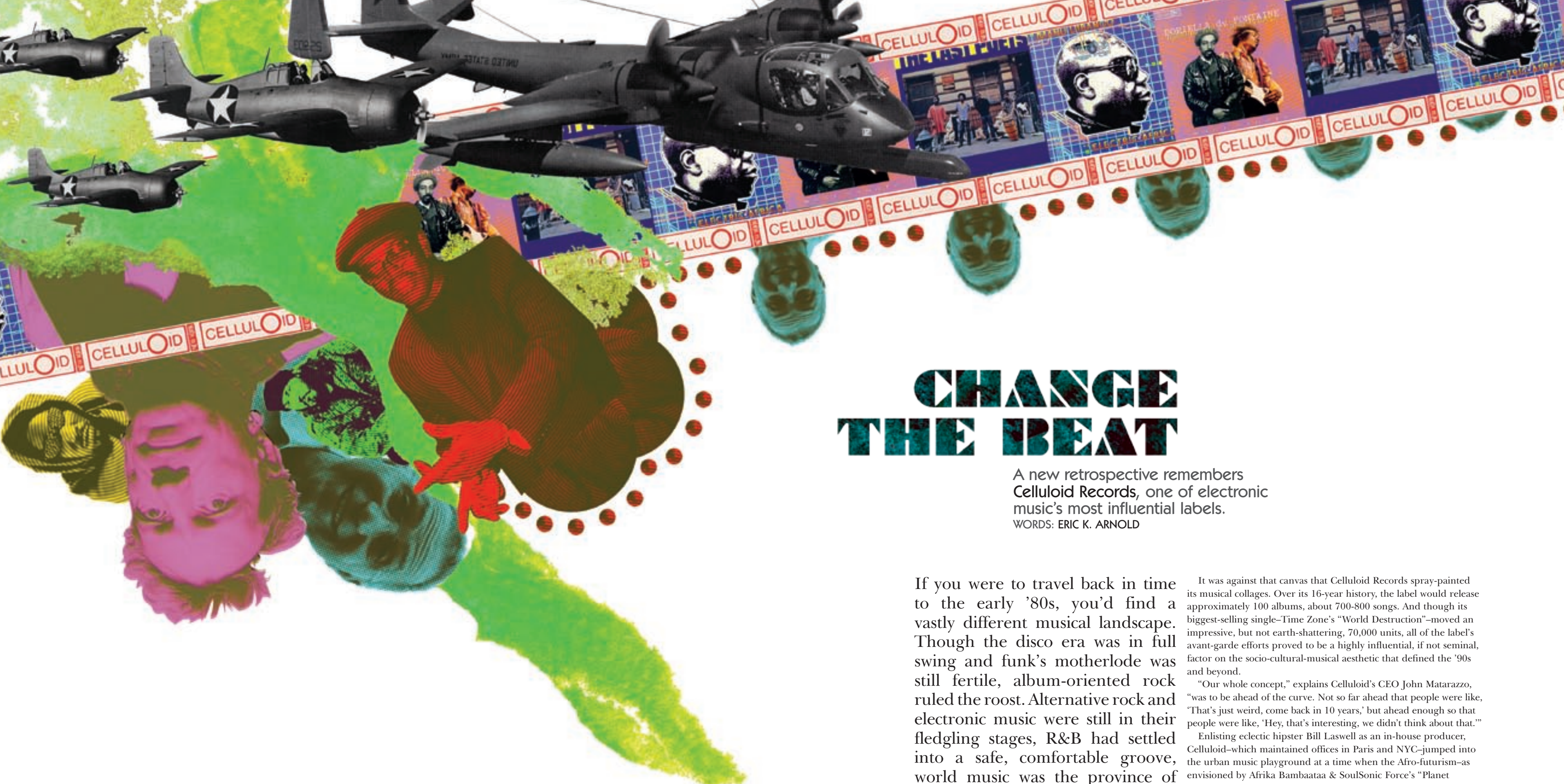


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## CHANGE THE BEAT

A new retrospective remembers  
Celluloid Records, one of electronic  
music's most influential labels.

WORDS: ERIC K. ARNOLD

If you were to travel back in time to the early '80s, you'd find a vastly different musical landscape. Though the disco era was in full swing and funk's motherlode was still fertile, album-oriented rock ruled the roost. Alternative rock and electronic music were still in their fledgling stages, R&B had settled into a safe, comfortable groove, world music was the province of folk-loving hippies, and hip-hop had yet to explode across mainstream America's consciousness.

It was against that canvas that Celluloid Records spray-painted its musical collages. Over its 16-year history, the label would release approximately 100 albums, about 700-800 songs. And though its biggest-selling single—Time Zone's "World Destruction"—moved an impressive, but not earth-shattering, 70,000 units, all of the label's avant-garde efforts proved to be a highly influential, if not seminal, factor on the socio-cultural-musical aesthetic that defined the '90s and beyond.

"Our whole concept," explains Celluloid's CEO John Matarazzo, "was to be ahead of the curve. Not so far ahead that people were like, 'That's just weird, come back in 10 years,' but ahead enough so that people were like, 'Hey, that's interesting, we didn't think about that.'"

Enlisting eclectic hipster Bill Laswell as an in-house producer, Celluloid—which maintained offices in Paris and NYC—jumped into the urban music playground at a time when the Afro-futurism—as envisioned by Afrika Bambaataa & SoulSonic Force's "Planet Rock"—had yet to be grounded by bling-bling materialism and ultraviolent gangsta clichés. The label put graffiti artists together with punk bands, electrified traditional African music, matched bilingual raps with futuristic electro-funk, and helped to establish sample-based music and turntablism as art forms. Though some of the now-defunct label's catalog is available through digital download on eMusic and iTunes, two discs' worth of definitive singles have resurfaced on German import Collision as *The Celluloid Years*.





**“THIS MIGHT BE COOL, THIS MIGHT BE A DISASTER.”**

The set begins with “Escapades of Futura 2000,” which featured The Clash backing Futura, the infamous aerosol abstractionist. Matarazzo says the song symbolized “the idea of blending things that you think just wouldn’t go together... it was special for us, because it represented where we thought things were gonna be going.” After subsequent Aerosmith-Run DMC and P.E.-Anthrax collaborations popularized the rap-rock concept, Matarazzo recalls, “All of a sudden, people were saying, ‘Yeah, that’s a cool idea.’ For me, that’s what really made it, the fact that we could influence people that way.”

Another influential single was Deadline’s “Makossa Rock,” a blueprint for the genre-bending multiculturalisms of today. With a wild, divergent groove built around a driving bassline and electronic snare hit—over which saxophones, trebly synths, syncopated percussion (from West African multi-instrumentalist Foday Musa Suso), bluesy harmonicas, and sampled soundbites swirl for a stamina-testing 10 minutes and 52 seconds—“Makossa Rock” sounded like the African diaspora itself, united through technology and rhythm. “We put people from all kinds of different genres on that record,” Matarazzo says. “That was one of the first records to come out at that time that was like a hybrid between pop music and traditional music from other countries.”

Further globally minded efforts followed; Cameroonian saxophonist Manu Dibango passed through Celluloid’s NYC studios long enough to record two albums and several 12”s. “Pata Piya” and “Abele Dance,” both included on *The Celluloid Years*, point the listener toward where world music is presently: clubby and electronic, yet still infused with traditional elements.

The ominous “World Destruction” brought together

hip-hop legend Bambaataa (who also recorded “The Wildstyle” and “Zulu Groove” for the label) with punk icon John Lydon. “It was an experiment. We thought, ‘This might be cool, this might be a disaster,’” Matarazzo says. “But it worked out great.” The song’s mention of a fiery apocalypse seems especially ominous today. “At the time we put it out, it was kind of a warning. But now, people look at it and go, ‘Hey, it really happened.’ It’s amazing. After 9/11, it was just like, ‘Wow, it’s prophetic.’”

Prophetic in a different way was “Change the Beat,” featuring future *Yo! MTV Raps* host Fab 5 Freddy and French femme fatale B-Side. Their bilingual rhymes were innovative, but the song will always be remembered for its vocodered sample—“*Ohh, this stuff is really fresh,*” one of turntablism’s most-scratched phrases. “That was amazing,” Matarazzo says. “You just couldn’t stop it. That was all over the place.”

Today, Celluloid’s legacy echoes in clubs everywhere, yet Matarazzo insists he doesn’t have time to look back. “What’s gonna start happening is, we’re gonna see more and more fragmentation in music,” he says. “The Internet is making that really possible, because the distribution channels are starting to break wide open. The old idea of mass merchandising is kinda ancient history. I think it’s kind of dead. You’re not gonna have one artist you’re gonna sell to half a billion people. You’re gonna have hundreds of artists and you’re gonna sell to maybe 10 or 20, 000 people. And the real challenge is gonna be to find the ones who can really cross over and come into a broader market.”

Chances are, Matarazzo’s speculation is spot-on. After all, he’s already predicted the future once.

*The Celluloid Years* is out now on Collision. [www.dub-music.de](http://www.dub-music.de)



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# HEAD TRIP

Downtempo stalwart Nightmares on Wax talks about his musical turning points.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTO: DIEDRE CALLAHAN

“I don’t need to attach to any scene, trend or place—I’m about making 100% what is true to me,” says 34-year-old George Evelyn, better known as Nightmares on Wax. One of the first artists on the pioneering Warp label, Evelyn helped bring touches of old reggae and soul into techno before unwittingly spearheading the trip-hop movement with 1995’s luscious *Smoker’s Delight*.

The latest effort from this Leeds, UK-based producer, *In A Space Outta Sound*, contains 12 thoughtfully constructed slow burners, fusing elements of black British soul, dub, and classic hip-hop with straight-up good vibes to soundtrack the perfect stoned summer day in the park. Evelyn’s got his hands full with developing up-and-coming young artists for his Wax On label, but we asked him to take a trip down memory lane and reminisce about his most important musical moments.

*In A Space Outta Sound* is out now on Warp Records. [www.warprecords.com](http://www.warprecords.com), [www.wax-on.net](http://www.wax-on.net)

## BIGGER BASS

“The first record I ever bought was Third World’s ‘Cool Meditation’ in 1997; I was seven years old. At the time, Bob Marley was exploding all over the world, but Steel Pulse and Third World were kind of like the underground reggae. When I got to nine or 10 years old, I really started buying records. When I was nine years old, my best friend at school had a brother who owned a reggae soundsystem called Messiah. We used to go after school to their lockup, where they kept their sound. All I was learning at this time was: bigger speaker boxes equal bigger sound and bigger bass. And the bigger the bass, the better the track. Along with this were dub albums by The Scientist; they used to use them to test the sound. Besides the bass, it was the cartoon artwork that attracted me to them. One that sticks in my head is *Scientist Rids the World of the Evil Curse of the Vampires*; the cover was all ghouls, zombies, and Draculas and it fascinated me.”

## BUFFALO SOLDIER

“The biggest record to me in my life is Malcolm McLaren’s ‘Buffalo Gals.’ This was 1982 or ’83. It was the first video footage of breakdancing and graffiti and people body-popping with white gloves on, these guys with turntables making these weird noises. It was mind-blowing. It debuted on *Top of the Pops* on Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. Go to school the next morning and everybody on the playground was breakdancing. Before you had people you hung out with; then breaking came out, and you had your *crew*. You started venturing out of your neighborhood to battle other people and your horizons spread. You might only be going half a mile from where you lived, but that’s farther than you used to go before. You cannot deny the fact that McLaren educated us. ‘Buffalo Gals’ probably wasn’t a landmark record if you came from the Bronx but it was a landmark record if you came from anywhere else in the world.”

## TRIBE VIBES

“In 1982, I was 12 years old and I went to a 12 Tribes dance—[named] after the 12 tribes of the Rastafarian culture—in Manchester. It was a coach trip with me and my close friend and her mother, who was part of the 12 Tribes. We didn’t know at the time who was in concert at this gig but it was Bob Marley. We were running around and he was standing out in the crowd like normal; the next thing you know he was on stage. I wasn’t in awe—I was too young to be star-struck. It wasn’t until I got home and told me brothers and sisters and they were like, ‘You saw what?!’ that I realized.”

## SECRET HATERS

“I proposed to my wife in Koh Samui, Thailand; it was at the big Buddhist temple on a Thursday at sunset. On Friday, we sorted the location out; Saturday I had a suit made; Sunday we went to meet the monks at the Buddhist temple, and we got married on Monday at half past nine. There was nobody DJing—all the music we had was an old ’80s mix CD that I had lying around. Our wedding dance was to a record that we actually hate, ‘Secret Lovers’ by Atlantic Starr. We decided to dance to it because we hate it so much. That record, and Ashford & Simpson’s ‘Solid.’”

## SUNSHINE MUSIC

“In the last four years I’ve been listening to a lot of old Greensleeves reggae records. I wanted to go back to the essence so I thought, ‘I’m going to listen to the shit I used to buy when I started collecting,’ like Eek-A-Mouse, Yellowman, Beres Hammond. This was music just for dances, for skanking. It was music that had sunshine in it. I’ve always tried to represent that feeling of sunshine or optimism in my music.”

“I’VE ALWAYS TRIED TO REPRESENT THAT FEELING OF SUNSHINE IN MY MUSIC.”



# HEATING UP

Hugh Masekela's legendary Chisa Label showcased cross-continental music without boundaries or bullshit.

WORDS: PATRICK SISSON  
ILLUSTRATIONS: JANICE KUN



In 1968, Hugh Masekela experienced what some would consider a career apex. The South African trumpet and flugelhorn player came to the US in 1961 to study at the Manhattan School of Music. Seven years later, his single "Grazing in the Grass," which eventually sold four million copies, hit number one in the charts. But he wasn't completely thrilled.

"Being an anti-establishment person, that didn't really intrigue me that much," he says. "I thought [the label execs] were fucking squares and exploitative."

Masekela was only moved by one thing: honest, soulful music. His passion took him around the world, propelling into business as one of the founders of the influential independent label, Chisa. Masekela lived like a rock star—he received a trumpet in the mail from Louis Armstrong when he was 17, Miles Davis gave him career advice when he was gigging in New York in the '60s, and he got along "like a brother" with Afro-beat legend Fela Kuti—but none of it really got to his head. "Musicians are ordinary people," says Masekela. "They eat, they play, they shit."

What moved this firebrand was music, especially the under-appreciated rhythms of Africa, and they led him to start Chisa (Swahili for "hot" or "burning") in 1966. As the powerful new compilation of never-before-heard gems, *The Chisa Years 1965-1977 (Rare and Unreleased)*, demonstrates, this artist-run label pushed passionate new music forward. Years before world music became a bland marketing term, Masekela and Chisa were fusing genres, capturing the raw sound of funk, Afro-beat, jazz, and South African rhythms. "I love all kinds of music," he says. "I've loved it since I was a child, and children don't categorize. I still don't categorize."

Born in 1939 in Witbank, South Africa, Masekela grew up surrounded by records. Absorbing



**“ANY ARTIST THAT COMES FROM AN OPPRESSED COMMUNITY AND DOESN'T SING OR TALK ABOUT IT NEEDS HIS HEAD EXAMINED.”**

everything from local bands to Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington, he became so obsessed with vinyl that his parents gave him piano lessons at age six to drag him away from the record player. But it was a movie he saw at age 13, *Young Man With a Horn* (based on the life of jazz trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke) that entranced him.

“In the movie, Kirk Douglas [who played the Beiderbecke character] stood in front of the band, had the most beautiful threads, took all the solos, didn't take shit from anybody, and got the girl,” Masekela remembers. “It seemed like the instrument to play.”

Soon, the young Masekela was begging for a horn. Local anti-apartheid Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, who helped the trumpeter get into his first band and later asked Louis Armstrong to send him a certain gift, granted his request in 1954. Masekela started jamming, but as the oppressive political climate of apartheid started to limit opportunities—“South Africa was in leg irons,” he recounts—he began looking elsewhere for musical opportunities. Singer Miriam Makeba, a childhood friend whom he would marry later in life, had already made a name for herself overseas. She helped convince him to come study in New York.

Masekela arrived in 1961, and Makeba introduced him to her musical inner circle, including Dizzy Gillespie and other jazz heavyweights. But his meeting with classmate Stewart Levine was just as profound. A fellow music obsessive, Levine (now a world-famous producer) became Masekela's friend and roommate. They soaked up live music in New York, clubbing until the early morning and returning to their apartment to dance to Masekela's *mbaqanga* records, a style that originated in South African townships.

By late 1966, Levine and Masekela, who had then relocated to Los Angeles, formed Chisa, and things started to move quickly. They inked a distribution deal with Uni Records (now Universal) in 1967, signed the Jazz Crusaders, and soon “Grazing in the Grass” reached hit status. But Uni wasn't interested in anything past the hit record, so Chisa split and many records remained unreleased. But Masekela, who was now playing sold-out gigs around the US and opening for Motown acts on the road, started talking with Berry Gordy, Motown Records' president. Soon, the two labels were working hand in hand.

But it wasn't enough to keep Chisa afloat. Motown was down with marketing the label, but it didn't

perform well enough and folded in 1975. Like Masekela, the label was all about music, yet it wasn't hard to understand why songs about corruption and racism made it onto many Chisa records.

“I think that any artist that comes from an oppressed community and doesn't sing or talk about it needs his head examined,” he said. “Now, I wasn't making music because of oppression; I was making music because I loved it and it's all I've ever done. The fact that I came from a country with oppressed people was just a coincidence. Had I been a garbage man, I would have been just as militant,” he exclaims.

While Chisa came to a premature close, its spirit lives on. Masekela, who still records, didn't stop following his convictions when the label folded. He recorded and toured extensively in the '70s and '80s, appearing with Paul Simon during the *Graceland* tour and writing “Bring Him Back Home,” an anthem for then-imprisoned leader Nelson Mandela, in 1985.

More importantly, he remained in the business of making records and supporting artists, especially after returning to South Africa in 1990. He now runs Chissa, a label similarly dedicated to DIY principles, and performs with many young South African artists. Decades after starting a label that predicted the boom in world music, Masekela is still supporting African music. Until there are more Africans running record labels, it's a role he won't stop playing.

“I think the local music industry needs to become an African-owned industry, where we have our own distribution and retail,” he notes. “So far, it's been a market that's been exploited, like minerals and cheap labor were exploited on this continent. What's important is to build an African industry that's independent. The thing is for Africans to be successful at home like Americans are successful at home.”

*The Chisa Years 1965-1975 (Rare and Unreleased)* is out now on BBE. [www.bbemusic.com](http://www.bbemusic.com)



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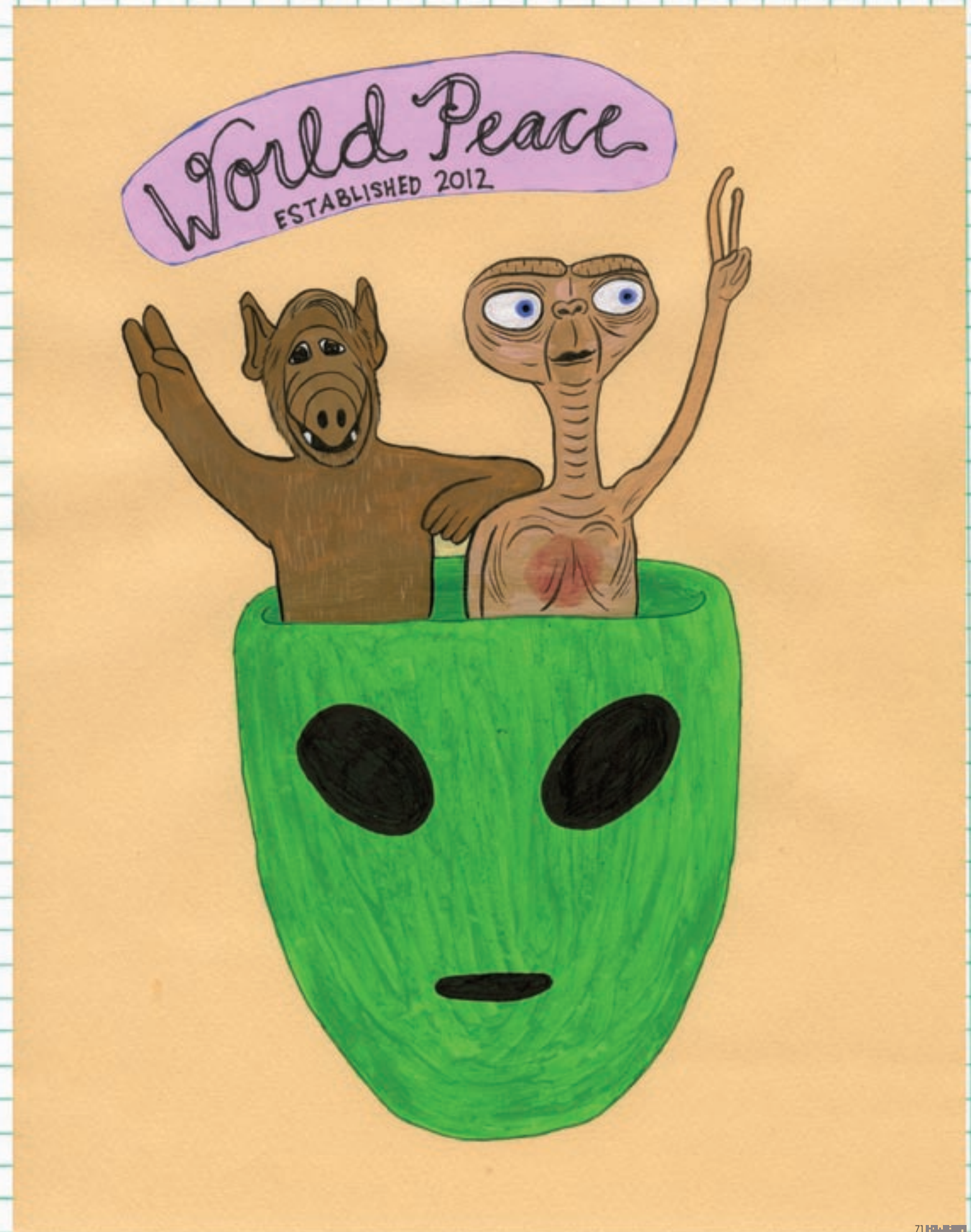
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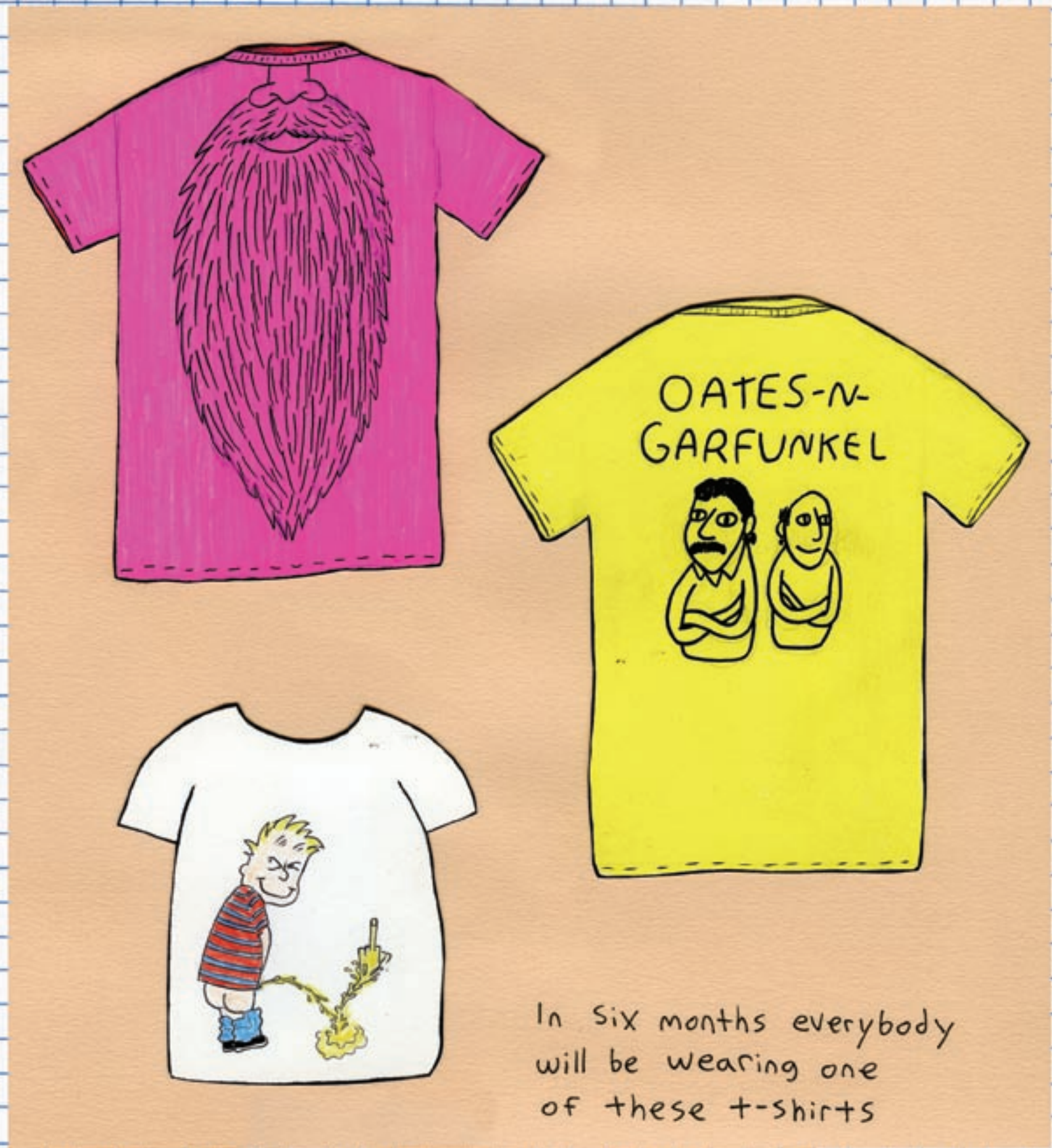
# EMMAE SMALL

Three Space 1026 artists gaze lovingly into their crystal balls.

In the future, ALF and E.T. will be touting world peace from inside a coffee mug shaped like an alien face—that is, if Andrew Jeffrey Wright, Crystal Kovacs, and Thom Lessner have anything to say about it. When we asked this triad—all of whom represent Philly art collective Space 1026—to give us six pages on what's yet to come in this world, they wilded out with pencil, watercolor, paint, ink, collage, and cameras. Wright made his own graph paper, Kovacs drew a hair suit

on a mannequin, and Lessner photographed the spandex-clad buttocks of his band, Sweat Heart. So what's the one thing the three weren't able to illustrate about the future? "Anything that will actually happen," says Wright, laughing. *Vivian Host*  
 Andrew Jeffrey Wright's *Art World* opens April 24 at Philly's Spector Gallery. *Frankie Martin Presents* opens in April at Space 1026.  
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- 5/24-Northampton, MA @ Pearl Street
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## SAN QUINN



HYPHY'S MORE THAN  
JUST HYPE

The so-called "New Bay" movement stands in the curious position of being the product of its own hype, and at the crossroads of transcending that hype altogether. On one hand, the term is something of a misnomer, given that many of the people involved are seasoned veterans. Yet there's no denying that the movement has brought a heightened sense of intensity to the Yay Area's urban music scene. With E-40 hooking up with Lil Jon and a strong contingent of lyrical turf-talkers armed with ultra-mega hyphy slaps, maintaining street cred while besieging clubs and radio outlets, eyes and ears are on long-awaited new albums by "Young Baby Boy" and the "Bay Area Mix Tape King."

Truth be told, they've both already paid enough dues to be inducted into the region's Hall of Game. But are their latest efforts enough to break through the invisible wall that has kept Baydestrians from getting their due props outside of the area?

Balance earned his stripes on the battle scene and mixtape circuit, and you can hear echoes of his freestyle days in his highly technical rhymes. He switches up his cadence and flow constantly, keeping ears perked for what he's gonna say next. "I chill like water in the winter/If rap was my girl then I'd father her placenta/New day and age, new Bay, new flow, new song to play," he proclaims on "Let the Bass Go," over an EA Ski banger with plenty of low-end. He flexes his storytelling skills

on "One Night Stand," shows his self-determination on "Rise," and latches on to a highly universal topic on "Paper," on which he comments, "The last nigga they knew from my city was 'Pac." The song might be the clearest indication yet that the New Bay dudes have their eyes on annexing new territories, one block at a time.

Straight outta the Fillmore, Quinn ain't nothin' nice—except when he's on the mic, of course. His style is instantly recognizable, but though he's as legit an MC as SF has ever produced, his turf-soldier stripes have actually detracted from his lyrical prowess. Quincy's always the guy on the hoodish posse cut with the nicest verse it seems, but the roguish company he keeps may obscure the fact that the guy has flows for days... and days. *The Rock* is his bid for rap immortality, and he nails it. He's so confident that he hardly relies on features to carry the album, preferring to do the majority of the heavy lifting himself. The Ski-produced "Hell Yeah" is just one of the album's many highlights; you'd have to be a total square not to feel the way it thumps with authority. "What they gon' do now? They gotta holla now," says the producer before Quinn drops it like it's hot: "Live in the flesh/Live from the West/Free of all suckers/And I ride with the rest."

Perhaps what was missing before from the Bay was unity, but now that folks have put the feuds behind them and set their sights on larger goals, nothing can stop them. In the end, both *The Rock* and *Young & Restless* succeed precisely because of their balance: sick-ass beats evenly matched with quality flows. Eric K. Arnold

## ALBUM REVIEWS 4.06

SAN QUINN  
THE ROCK  
SMC/US/CD

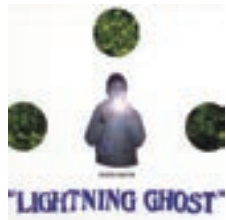
BALANCE  
YOUNG & RESTLESS  
SMC/US/CD





**APATHY**  
EASTERN PHILOSOPHY

Babygrande/US/CD  
With his eloquence alone, Apathy should have little trouble collecting new listeners when his major label debut drops on Atlantic. But for now, he's still rocking on an independent and he's doing it well. On *Eastern Philosophy*, he dubs himself the "King of Connecticut," making it clear that his cockiness hasn't faded a bit since his days as a shit-talking MC. But at least Ap has expanded his subject matter—he now rocks over quintessential East Coast productions about how he's done with being broke ("9 To 5") and how his CT stomping grounds aren't as pristine as many would like to believe ("I Remember"). Not too complex, but far from run-of-the-mill, Apathy looks likely to help bridge the gap between the underground and mainstream. *Max Herman*



**IAN ALLEN**  
NOVA'S LOUNGE  
Nova/US/CD  
New Jersey producer Ian Allen's debut smacks of relaxed sophistication, lending itself just as easily to swank fashionista soirées as it does to your bedroom. *Nova's Lounge's* lush, jazz-inflected pieces are thoughtfully produced but, like many new producers, Allen sometimes falls back on monotonous phrasing, making one yearn for his lovely beats to take a more purposeful direction ("Meet Me Halfway"). Allen is most engaging when he ventures into more percussive territory, using simple but catchy syncopated rhythms ("Kabena") or lean house lines ("Soho Movement"). *Janet Tzou*



**APOLLO NOVE**  
RES INEXPLICATA VOLANS  
Crammed Disc/BEL/CD  
BANDA UNIÃO BLACK  
BANDA UNIÃO BLACK  
Commonfolk/US/CD  
While Apollo Nove draws mainly on bossa nova and União Black on funk, both of these albums are basically trying to do the same thing: add a modern edge to traditional Brazilian music. Relative newcomer Apollo Nove mixes bossa with rock influences, synthesizers, organs; you name it. Unfortunately, the result doesn't sound

updated—it sounds unfocused, with a number of tracks never hitting their stride. In contrast, even though União's been around since the '70s, their album stays true to their *Black Rio* roots while still sounding new and soulful—and, above all, fun. It's regrettably short, clocking in at around 40 minutes, but it's pure party music. If funk this fresh doesn't make you dance, check your pulse. *Luciana Lopez*

**AUDIO BULLYS**  
GENERATION

Astralwerks/US/CD  
Audio Bullys' sophomore effort doesn't borrow a lick from The Streets, as has often been the charge. For starters, the Bullys are far more clubby ("Shot You Down" plays like a house version of Nancy Sinatra via *Kill Bill*), and their hooks tend toward the mod-sounding side ("Generation" invokes The Kinks and The Jam, never mind its embedded Who reference). By no means riveting, *Generation* still earns its keep with clever voiceovers interspersed among the beats; while there's no standout like "Ego War," the brash "Made Like That" features the mighty Roots Manuva, who lends credibility to the duo's soundsystem-hop. A mixed bag, sure, but at least there's more candy than rocks. *Daniel Sivek*

**THE BAMBOOS**  
STEP IT UP

Tru Thoughts-Ubiquity/US/CD  
It's been a few years since The Bamboos made ripples in the throwback soul scene with their two powerful 7" platters. Back to trouble the waters once again, The Bamboos shoot rapid-fire soul from the hip on their long-awaited debut album. Wedged somewhere between the Muscle Shoals sound and The JB's, this Australian sextet flosses through 11 slabs of lo-fi soul like nobody's business. Blue-eyed soul siren Alice Russell spices up the stew on both the title track and their take on Afronaught's intergalactic boogie excursion "Transcend Me." Who knew the outback was so funky? *Rico "Superbizee" Washington*

**BIOSPHERE**  
DROPSONDE

Touch/UK/CD  
It was inevitable that Norwegian ambient minimalist Geir Jenssen (Biosphere) would explore the microfbers of jazz. After a dozen years of pioneering quiet, cold-filtered electronic music that invoked his Arctic surroundings, Jenssen now applies his techniques to ECM-style sounds (think Keith Jarrett, Ketil Bjørnstad, etc.). Unlike his jazz-noodling countrymen, Jenssen sacrifices none of his contemplative ambient climates on *Dropsonde*, his fifth release for England's austere Touch label. Whereas Jenssen's attempt to "bliss out" classical music samples and loops on '02's *Shenzhou* proved lackluster, the jazz snippets used on "In Triple Time" and "Fall In Fall Out" add tension to a recording that will leave you mesmerized for repeated listens. *Tomas Palermo*

**BIRD SHOW**  
LIGHTNING GHOST

Kranky/US/CD  
Bird Show might remind listeners of early records by Joan of Arc, but with the ceremonial dissonance of a funeral and wedding taking place simultaneously. Propelled by Ben Vida's passion for throbbing percussion and effortless chanting, *Lightning Ghost* is a quest for a sonic connection with nature, God, and the mysticism of sound. While each track pulses through a number of stages—be it lush humming or schizophrenic noise—the songs rarely exceed five minutes, leaving you refreshed after each emotional trainwreck. Without sounding exceedingly ambitious, it appears Bird Show is well on its way to sublimely realizing its barrage of lo-fi screeches and swells. *Fred Miketa*

**THE CONCRETES**  
IN COLOUR

Astralwerks/US/CD  
For their second album, the eight-piece Swedish girl band takes their pop sensibilities close to the realm of Americana, forcing the two worlds to meet in some territory in between. Blame it on the songwriting, the seeming disorganization of the tracklisting, or the mere concept of trying to combine uplifting pop with one of the most depressing genres out there; whatever the reason, the production capabilities are present here, but the album doesn't quite reach its full potential. *Jennifer Marston*

**CONTROLLER.CONTROLLER**  
X-AMOUNTS

Paper Bag/CAN/CD  
Sometime during the recent ascendancy of dance-punk chic, we veered away from the punk part of the equation. Strategically ripped \$60 tees do not punk rock make. Just ask Toronto's Controller.Controller. Anchored by singer Nirmala Basnayake's com-

manding presence—which at times reminds of Kristin Hersh or Andrea Zollo of Pretty Girls Make Graves—the quintet melds the staccato rhythmic signature of '80s New Wave and disco with the urgent melodic heaviness of golden-era punk and emo. Add a rhythm section tighter than a hipster's jeans and some stylish guitar interplay and *X-Amounts* adds up to compelling dance-punk calculus. *Steve Marchese*

**CRÈME DE MENTHE**  
THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF EROTICISM IN THE SUBURBS

DAKAR & GRINSER  
TRIUMPH OF FLESH  
Disco B/GER/CD  
Slithering, grinding, electro sleaze-pop; bumping, grinding, perverted EBM—Disco B's two new releases turn stalking into a musical art form, and art itself into a voyeuristic pleasure. After rebirthing the electro sound with their 1999 debut, D&G's *Triumph* leaves fans wanting for little; "25 Reptile" alone proves their burbling sex dances are as sleek and gothically erotic as the faux-snakeskin CD cover. *The Impossibility* finds Scottish industrialized dancefloor packer Crème de Menthe slightly less inventive, sounding alternately like Felix da Housecat's better runway material and late '80s Teutonic robot funk. A feast for the fans, but neutral observers may tire of the fetishism. *Justin Hopper*

**DAN CURTIN**  
WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

Headspace Recordings/UK/CD  
Despite his recent relocation to Berlin, veteran American producer Dan Curtin hasn't let the chilliness of German techno influence his warm, buoyant sound. The backbone of his new full-length is still cerebral Detroit rhythms, but in typical fashion, sound-waves have been stretched, edges have been smoothed over, and patterns have been re-imagined by this ace beatsmith. Curtin isn't ushering in anything radically different on this release, though it's more mellow and restrained than past efforts. Rather, subtle twists—like the bubbly synths of "No Time for Gravity Waves" or the combination of cut-up vocals and delicate electro fragments on slow burner "Peach"—showcase the work of a steady, experienced hand. *Patrick Sisson*

**DEPTH AFFECT**  
ARCHE-LYMB

Autres Directions In Music/FRA/CD  
Following up 2004's *Mesquin* EP, Depth Affect returns to Autres Directions to drop their debut album, sliding in nicely amongst the recent works of Prefuse 73 and Boom Bip as they steer their electronic/instrumental/hip-hop fusion into sublime daydream territory. Employing the lyrical talents of the Cyne MCs (City Centre Offices) and Alias (Anticon), *Arche-Lymb* gets grounded with some serious street-level grit, while tracks like "Blinzeln Blume" and "Castor's Lesson" wash away all sense of form in a cerebral tide of synthetic ambience. Not a dud in the bunch—just press play and walk away. *Doug Morton*

**DEUX PROCESS**  
IN DEUX TIME

Avatar/US/CD  
MCs Vise Versa and Chief Nek grew up in Colorado Springs, a town known more for Rev. James Dobson's Focus on the Family organization than for hip-hop. After blowing up the Springs, they moved to LA and recorded this solid debut; on the introspective single "Everyday" they document this transition, with help from fellow Springs native/LA transplant Stro the 89th Key (The Procussions). Standout tracks here include the soulful "Sweet Music" and the banging hard "In Deux Time," both of which announce the duo as an estimable presence in the City of Angels. *James Mayo*

**DROP THE LIME**  
SHOT SHOT HEARTS

Tigerbeat 6/US/CD  
It's hardly enough to just break jungle beats and flail around punching old rave stabs and kick drums through the distort-o-matic these days. If you're Drop the Lime, you punch up *Shot Shot Hearts* with crazed, possibly semi-ironic exhortations, then leave everything on the dancefloor for a couple of tracks; and—just when that gets predictable—you haul out a slightly grimy cabaret croon, slow down the BPMs, and figure out what would happen if Leonard Cohen grew up with regga-rave breakcore and Minor Threat on the turntable instead of Frank Sinatra. *Rob Geary*

**EL DA SENSEI**  
THE UNUSUAL

Fat Beats/US/CD  
The title of El Da Sensei's new album is a bit misleading. He's one of the last cats you would classify as "unusual." In fact, El has consistently been one of the best back-to-

basics MCs since his days in The Artifacts. The title of the invigorating opening cut, "Crow Pleasa," is undoubtedly a more fitting description for this New Jeruz native. As he raps on "What's My Name?," his music is "just that boom-bap accompanied with the rhyme." With his flow as sharp as ever and beatsmiths like ILLmind, DJ Revolution, and J Rawls on his side, El's barebones approach pays off pretty nicely. *Max Herman*

**ERAST**  
CYBERPUNK

Laboratory Instinct/GER/CD  
Presented in game-save menu format, the 16 tracks of Nika Machaidze's debut LP transcend the often-diluted soundtrack approach with a selection of superbly written and truly attention-grabbing electronic music. It would be pointless to assign genre references here, as Cyberpunk's progression takes the listener from the symphonic flutters of "Influtusa" and "TV Show" to the opiate pixilation of "Lullaby" and the fractured percussion of "Dimpitauri" in the space of one hour. Machaidze's film and video-production background is obvious, and he evokes emotion and imagery quite prominently throughout the album. My only complaint here is the lack of any embedded Quicktime eye candy. Maybe next time. *Doug Morton*

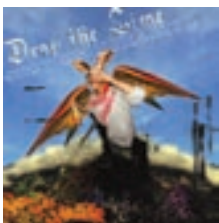
**EVERLOVELY LIGHTNINGHEART**  
CUSP

Hydrahead/US/CD  
With just one 40-minute-plus track, *Cusp* plays like a brutal winter night in its entirety. Driven by sporadic piano outbursts and an apocalyptically chiming arsenal of instruments, this experimental duo defines exhibitionist songwriting with their freely constructed, uninhibited style. The howling basement drone that comprises the first 10 minutes of *Cusp* could sedate any metalhead with a satanic palate or ambient afi-



**J DILLA**  
DONUTS

Stones Throw/US/CD  
Before his death, the markedly shy and perennially understated beatmaker (and occasional MC) J Dilla crafted killer drum-and-sample palettes for the best of the best, De La Soul, Common, and Busta have all worked lyrics over his magically sludgy beats. However, the true genius of this beatsmith shone through not on glossed-up radio edits with MCs spitting all over them, but on his own instrumentals, when nary a word—save for the odd Dionne Warwick sample ("Walkinonit")—was laid overtop. *Donuts* contains 30-odd loops that rarely exceed two minutes in length (made during a lengthy hospital stay in Los Angeles), and it showcases Dilla's immense prowess with an MPC, tone arms, and a basement full of dusty grooves. Check the wacked-out Raymond Scott grab of a Bendix ad on "Lightworks" or the high-speed-chase aesthetic of "Workinonit," and you'll agree that few MCs' vocals could top the highs achieved here. *Ken Taylor*



cionados with a lust for serenity. If I could rename this record, I'd call it *Contemplating Life and Death in a Haunted Brothel With a Shaman Druglord*. Welcome to exquisite chaos, boys and girls. *Fred Miketa*

**FRANCISCO MUSIC BUSINESS**

Nature/ITA/CD

Patience is a virtue, and an important one to have when listening to the debut solo album from Rome native Francisco. Though the first half of the disc is deceptively homogenous, rarely straying from the basic house format, a brief interlude called "Filmissimo" clears the mind and ushers in the second half of the album where Francisco shakes the 4/4 combination around a bit, revs up the synths, and adds a few well-timed vocals to finish things off. The end result is a fine patchwork of Chicago house and Italo-disco worth giving a listen. *Jennifer Marston*

**FUTURE PIGEON THE ECHODELIC SOUNDS OF FUTURE PIGEON**

Record Collection/US/CD

Too much sleekly machined dub-techno has left dub feeling like a relic, rather than the hallucinogenic sci-fi that spurted from the boards of 1970s Jamaica. Leave it to Future Pigeon, an LA-based soundmob, to push the form back to the future. *The Echodelic Sounds* has piles of signature dub effects (the influence of Scientist can be heard in every beat), but takes off into expansive realms where harsh guitars, synthesizers, and punk croons meet easy-skanking rhythms. The band is unafraid to version their own productions, with their own rework of "Wicked Man" aced by Mikey Dread's melodic toasts. *Rob Geary*



**MUALLEM FRANKIE SPLITS**

Compost/GER/CD

On his debut full-length, Munich-born David Muallem immediately comes out swinging, making soul, funk, hip-hop, and electro as if he'd been reared in each department from birth. Right off the bat, the thumping synths and bass of "Are You Ready? (Turn off the Lights)," featuring the hot-tongued vocals of Amazon, drive straight for the dancefloor: "*I know you see me in da club/And you wanna get a little rub, doncha?/You wanna dance all over me/And make me hot 'n' sweaty, doncha?*" she teases confidently. It's just one side of Muallem's split personality—he adeptly switches between hip-hop (featuring Beans, Lyrics Born, and Wordsworth), synth-driven pop, and Erykah Badu-styled R&B on tracks like "Some Loving," a slow, dubbed-out groove featuring Martine Girault. Even though there's an overload of '80s nostalgia at points, Muallem proves himself to be a fine new player in the game, with all-over-the-board production and a style all his own. *Ken Taylor*

**WECHSEL GARLAND EASY**

Karaoke Kalk/GER/CD

On *Easy*, Wechsel Garland offers up his latest serving of fireside-chamomile electronica. But scaling back the electronic element almost entirely on some tracks, a good portion of the album plays like some ether-blurred Tropicana lounge experience ("Waves," "Corona Loco") or a foray into PBS's acoustic-music concert archives from '70s. The problem isn't the territory he tackles; rather that he does it so damned well. *Easy* really draws out its intended emotions—and whether we fancy Garland's schmaltzy, feel-good vocalisms or not, the instrumental potency cannot be denied. *Doug Morton*

**GIL MANTERAS' PARTY DREAM BLOODSONGS**

Fat Possum/US/CD

Although I'm as much a fan of "party rockin'" and "settin' it off" as anyone, sometimes when an act tries too hard to be a good-time band, the result can feel contrived. Pop should write itself; Christina Aguilera and Black Eyed Peas notwithstanding, a catchy hook ain't catchy unless it's real. In other words, overproduction can't save the mediocre songwriting and male-diva posturing evident on this debut. In all fairness, the electro-influenced instrumentals themselves aren't bad, but the vocals kind of sound like outtakes from a Korn b-side. Oof. *Alexander Posell*

**GUITAR TOKYO**

Onitor/GER/CD

Inspired by the work of My Bloody Valentine, Michael Lückner's Guitar project was intended to further that group's ideas through manipulated guitar samples. On *Tokyo*, the third Guitar record (and first with vocalist Ayako Akashiba), the duo introduces an identity separate from their influences. The spirit of MBV is still evident on tracks like "Wash Me Away," but the record also spans lush pop ("Sunday Afternoon At Tamagawa River") and playful hip-hop ("Akiko"). Far from derivative, *Tokyo* is a carefully executed record that should not be missed. *Josiah Hughes*

**HALL/RANALDO/HOOKER OASIS OF WHISPERS**

Alien8/CAN/CD

Sonic Youth guitarist Lee Ranaldo and NYC-based energy-jazz drummer William Hooker have spent more than a decade drifting across the dust bowl between the Atlantic and the Pacific, carrying an urn of the American Dream and slowly realizing they're amongst its ghosts. On *Oasis of Whispers*, Ranaldo watercolors the heavens in thick grays through his jagged riffs and mammoth drones while Hooker roils on the trap kit as if possessed. The tension never ceases as Canadian multi-instrumentalist Glen Hall takes the lead, sometimes nervously muttering and exhaling into his flute ("Eyemote"). The only disappointment here is Ranaldo's low-key presence, where he plays his strings like twigs, as if to let the band occasionally trample over them. *Cameron Macdonald*

**HASSLE HOUND LIMELIGHT CORDIAL**

Staubgold/GER/CD

Ramshackle Glaswegian sound collectors Hassle Hound finally bring the post-folk-tronic, cut 'n' paste, strummy-hummy jams on this impossibly blessed full-length. With neighing horses, *boinnng*-ing springs, and flamenco and psychedelic guitars, Hassle Hound is the musical equivalent of a Valhalla-esque flea market crossed with a super-group of every charismatic, story-hoarding uncle the world has known. Moreover, the depth and breadth of samples layered in among the exquisitely crafted songs almost makes this a train-hopping, long-haired hippie cousin of The Books. *Brian Paul*

**KARSH KALE BROKEN ENGLISH**

Six Degrees/US/CD

On his third full-length, tabla player/drummer/DJ Karsh Kale keeps his progressive South Asian temperament intact while moving into rock, hip-hop, and broken-beat territory. Merely hinting at these styles on *Liberation*, we find a full assault of cross-cultural aesthetics merging into a driving soundclash. Cincinnati-reared MC Napoleon Solo adds lyrical depth to "Manifest" while Sophie Michalitsianos ensures that "Beautiful" lives up to its name, but *Broken English's* real strengths are *ghazal* vocalist Vishal Vaid and Kale's creative depth as producer. One listen to the anthemic "Rise Up" lets you know something new is brewing in global electronic music. *Derek Beres*

**KERO ONE WINDMILLS OF THE SOUL**

Plug Label/US/CD

An emcee/producer/DJ based in the Bay Area, Kero One has been grinding for a decade now, and finally drops his full-length debut, *Windmills of the Soul*. Oozing dusty drum breaks, mellow loops, and live instrumentation aplenty—Fender Rhodes, sax, and guitar are all present—*Windmills* is grown-man hip-hop for all the golden-era cats. Lyrically, he delivers compelling and relatable tales of real-life situations, whether dealing with the ladies ("Tempted"), hectic situations ("In a Dream"), or his love of vinyl ("Keep It Alive!"). With high-profile collaborations on deck and a successful Japanese tour under his belt, look for Kero to start making big moves. *Brolin Winning*

**LANDESVATTER LAX**

Normoton/GER/CD

*Lax*, the second full-length from Berlin-based techno composer Joachim Landsvatter, demonstrates significant growth since 2003's *Lava*. Smoothly combining elements of minimal house, hip-hop, and jazz, the beats are complimented by warm loops. Constantly evolving, each track assumes a narrative structure, making *Lax* a densely moving and refined effort. From the sprawling glitch of "In." to the jazzy undertones of "Mank.," the record provides soothing ambiance while provoking closer examination...and it'll make you wanna dance. *Josiah Hughes*

**LIARS DRUM'S NOT DEAD**

Mute/US/CD

On their third album, Liars combines an eerie, otherworldly aura with a scathingly visceral attack as they simultaneously craft haunting, caressing melodies and calming, diaphanous atmospheres. Sure, Liars can *Sturm und Drang* with the best *klangmeisters* around, but they also realize the importance of beauty (albeit one embossed with bruises of myriad psychedelic hues). *Drum's Not Dead* unsurprisingly stresses robust tom-tom thumps, which emphatically punctuate the trio's bizarrely distorted guitar (or is it a flanged didgeridoo?) and singer Angus Andrew's falsettos and My Bloody Valentine-like coos (a few tracks recall MBV's *Isn't Anything*). Overall, this is Liars' most emotionally captivating and menacingly tuneful work. They're improving with (r)age. *Dave Segal*

**LOS DE ABAJO LDA VS THE LUNATICS**

Real World/US/CD

In order to secure a moniker for their inventive ska/cumbia/reggae/punk aesthetic, Mexico City-based Los De Abajo coined the term "Tropipunk." On their fourth full-length, they've now mastered the style they created. This eight-piece outfit is able to swerve effortlessly between guitar- and trombone-driven ska to gorgeous acoustic and keyboard-tinged electronic music. The beautiful "Resistencia," a head-nod to their continual social awareness (the track features a Zapatista leader), is worlds apart from the London-meets-Jamaica cumbia cover of Fun Boy Three's "The Lunatics (Have Taken Over the Asylum)." This is the world LDA inhabits, and it makes perfect sense. *Derek Beres*

**THE LOST CHILDREN OF BABYLON THE 911 REPORT: THE ULTIMATE CONSPIRACY**

Babygrande/US/CD

Nearly five years after 9/11, the Babylon ciphers have something on their minds: breaking our numbness to violence by voicing the human heartbreak that is a consequence of politics. Lyrical ingenuity aside, vibrating pulses of sadness and jolts of deep anger permeate this album, mostly in the form of haunting melodies and passionate anti-Bush attacks. When "Never Die" intones "*I'd rather go to hell before they send me to the war/Never know what you fightin' for,*" you can appreciate the forum that hip-hop first cracked open for other unpopular views many years ago. *Janet Tzou*

**MAN MAN SIX DEMON BAG**

Ace Fu/US/CD

Philly collective Man Man's roguishly primitive music can sometimes find itself overshadowed by the outfit's junkie-jug-band stage presence. But not acknowledging *Six Demon Bag's* sonic brilliance would be almost criminal. Frontman Honus Honus—cartoonishly curtsying atop a bone heap of indie romp and thrift-shop stomp—possesses a stunning savant's vision. Sure to pull Man Man's songs out of the formidable shadow of their bat-shit-crazy live show, the 13 songs that cling to this smokehouse of a record are beautifully crude, finger-painted traces of Captain Beefheart, Tom Waits, and other kitchen-sink greats. *Robbie Mackey*

**MUSIC A.M. UNWOUND FROM THE WOODS**

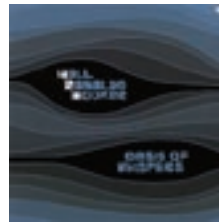
Quatermass/BEL/CD

Even the most vivid dreams are often only silent films. However, had we the ability to score our dreams, Germany's Music A.M. would be the perfect accompaniment. With a gentle combination of minimal guitar, stuttering electronic percussion, and a swirling digital mist of various electronics, the trio creates the perfect backdrop for singer Luke Sutherland's distinctively breathy storytelling. With a calculated mix of high-art affectation and everyman seduction, Sutherland (not unlike Jeff Buckley or Sam Prekop) has the ability to use his voice with uncommon instrumentation. The result is much like a dream itself—both strangely alienating and eerily familiar. *Steve Marchese*

**NEXT LIFE ELECTRIC VIOLENCE**

Cock Rock Disco/GER/CD

Norway's Next Life reminds me of a time when videogame music all of a sudden went metal. We heard the group's frantic, coin-operated sound a decade ago thanks to spazz-core, one-off Shakuhachi Surprise, and a few of Mr. Bungle's ADD-addled moments. Does Next Life add anything new? Yes. Their edits are quicker and they probably use better software as they jump between speed-metal blurts, hardcore-techno jackhammering, and "boss music" (as heard in countless Nintendo games). "Circle and Star" faithfully captures the 8-bit melodrama while "The Way Out" opens with odd modem screeches before the usual violence kicks in. Essentially, *Electric Violence* is like a game cartridge that needs to be blown into several times before playing. *Cameron Macdonald*



**PEDRO**

**PEDRO + FEAR & RESILIENCE REMIXES EP**

Mush/US/CD

Originally released on Melodic Records in 2003, Pedro's self-titled debut should be familiar territory. Rising star James Rutledge ensconced himself securely into the cadre of glitch-hoppers that includes Prefuse 73 and Four Tet, though *Pedro* always felt muted next to the former's bravado and the latter's maniacal grandiosity. Likewise, the album's Stateside release three years later doesn't really push boundaries, but does remind us that Rutledge's surgical beats and fractured pastoral melodies can hold their own. But the real gem is the accompanying *Fear & Resilience* EP, featuring remixes of the LP's best-known track by Prefuse 73, Cherrystones, Danger Mouse, and others. Home Skillet and Four Tet offer particularly amazing stuff: one dismantles the original into thousands of grandfather clocks chiming psychotically down a rabbit hole; the other pushes further with a 21-minute build that releases fragments of Pedro's strings and horns into a free-jazz masterpiece. *Anna Balkrishna*



**NOBODY & MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY**  
**TREE COLORED SEE**

Mush/US/CD

*Tree Colored See* sounds like California-dreamin' folkadelia smacked gently in the face with a percussive electronic backbone. Oh wait, it is! Here, Mystic Chords (Jen Cohen and Christopher Gunst) team up with Nobody (Prefuse 73 cohort Elvin Estela) for a collaboration that sounds almost exactly like you'd expect. Dreamy to the point of horizontal, sprinkled throughout with harmonicas and twanging guitars, *Tree Colored See* will send you thumbing through your old Sparklehorse, Elliot Smith, and Belle & Sebastian albums without quite being able to pinpoint why you feel so darned nostalgic. *Anna Balkrishna*



**PHANTASMATRASH**  
**POLICY WONKS**

Insanic Workshop/US/CD

Phantasmatrash's *Policy Wonks* fails on every level it aims to reach. Touting itself as "One of the most encompassing experimental hip-hop records of recent years," the 10-tracker contains nameless songs that worsen as the album progresses. Converge guitarist Kurt Ballou's production is indeed eclectic, but disappoints at every genre it attempts. Whether touching on IDM, hardcore, or hip-hop, the album's production is extremely repetitive, abrasive, and unmoving. Rapper Ashton Boyton's delivery is lifeless and his lyrics are full of uninspired clichés. Although surely well intentioned, Phantasmatrash's latest release is a contrived mess. *David Ma*



**THE PSYCHIC PARAMOUNT**  
**LIVE 2002 THE FRANCO-ITALIAN TOUR**

Public Guilt/US/CD

"Power trio" falls way short in describing the nuclear energy generated by the Psychic

Paramount. Featuring two former members of phenomenal noise rockers Laddio Bolocko (guitarist Drew St. Ivany and bassist Ben Armstrong), the Psychic Paramount plays frightfully intense instrumental music of the spheres—mainly the sun. On this CD, it sounds as if the players are going to combust as they rage with finesse on these European stages. Like Glenn Branca and The Boredoms, PP are masters of blazing ascension, of rock as a superhuman centrifuge that makes its listeners feel both puny and omnipotent. This is like a money shot that lasts 45 minutes. *Dave Segal*

**PUBLIC ENEMY**  
**REBIRTH OF A NATION**

Guerrilla Funk/US/CD

Revisiting old beats, rhymes, and theories and reinventing them anew, Chuck D here displays a confidence absent since *Apocalypse '91*, though Flavor Flav's giddiness is sorely missed. Public Enemy fans have waited 15 years for *Rebirth of a Nation* and with the addition of Paris, as well as guest spots by Immortal Technique, MC Ren, and dead prez, community is in full effect. Hearing Chuck rip through the rock-filled "Hard Rhythm" and *Nation of Millions*-esque "Rise" reminds us of his masterful poetics. This crew may not have another *Black Planet* in them, but this *Rebirth* can nevertheless instill fear in fake-ass emcees. *Derek Beres*

**REEL PEOPLE**  
**SECOND GUESS**

Defected/UK/CD

With humble beginnings as a studio project, Reel People has blossomed over the last several years into a live band garnering rave reviews. Originally released in 2003, the beefed-up version of *Second Guess* consolidates the group's previous musical output, and then some. Talented luminaries such as Kaidi Tatham, Afronaught, and Vanessa Freeman deliver infectious grooves and top-notch vocals, moving future soul into the now. From the broken vibe of "In The Sun" to the mellow grooves of "Back 2 Base," Reel People stand tall without looking back. Essential. *Velanche*

**REK THE HEAVYWEIGHT**  
**TIMELESS**

Chill/US/CD

The MC formerly known as Spawn was a founding member of emo-rap unit Atmosphere, but don't expect any whiny obsessing over ex-girls when Rek the Heavyweight touches the mic. The Minnesota MC's smooth, straightforward lyrical style has little in common with his former sparring partner, Slug, and everything in common with straightforward '90s lyricists like O.C. Unfortunately what Rek lacks is his Atmosphere producer Ant's forceful beats. On *Timeless*, his producers come with soulful, Tribe-y beats which sound nice but don't do enough to make Rek's rhymes pop. *Jesse Serwer*

**SCANALYZER**  
**ON THE ONE AND THE ZERO**

Positron!/US/CD

*On the One and the Zero* is a chunky bit of synth work with thrashalong drums from a group that clearly has been immersed in German and Eastern European hard tekno and breakcore. Scanalyzer focuses intensely on squeezing every last drop out of their gear and plug-ins; this makes for sounds reminiscent of the industrial scene from which the group sprang. Though this record lacks the wicked warm dub of a screaming Scud or Full Watts production, it's still solid and worth checking for those who are down for the core. *Matt Earp*

**SCIENTIST**  
**DUB 911**

Nature Sounds/US/CD

On *Dub 911*—his first album of all-new material in three years—the dude that once rid the world of evil vampires and repelled space invaders once again shows his mastery of the dub format. Layering shimmering keyboards, twinkling bells, wailing guitars, vocal washes, and various FX over a batch of familiar riddims, Scientist keeps the reverb and echo more understated than some of his peers while emphasizing overall instrumental craftsmanship. No two tracks sound alike; each is meticulously constructed for maximum drum-and-bass-driven, time-space continuum-shifting effect. Were Scientist to work outside of the reggae field, he'd be a household name. As it stands now, he'll have to settle for merely being one of dub's most respected architects. *Eric K. Arnold*

**SHAKEYFACE**  
**BICYCLE DAY BOOGALOO**

It's Bananas/US/CD

Longtime NYC DJ Doug "Shakeyface" Smiley had to clear a hurdle to create his first LP: figuring out how to make a coherent album while coming from a seasoned mixtape mentality. Moving from moments of Dabrye-styled digital glitch to the abstract instrumentalism of Daedelus, Shakeyface sounds most at home on "Looking Ahead"

and "As I Was Saying," two plaintive, end-of-winter IDM repeat players. Ambitious, forward-thinking, and undeniably talented, Shakeyface has put together a palette of bright sonic colors on *Bicycle Day Boogaloo*, while he may not yet blend them with the skill of a master painter, this album nevertheless contains the first brushstrokes of a brilliant musical portrait. *Steve Marchese*

**SHAWN LEE'S PING PONG ORCHESTRA**  
**STRINGS & THINGS**

Ubiquity/US/CD

Multi-instrumentalist and singer Shawn Lee—whose varied musical escapades have found him working alongside such disparate artists as The Spice Girls, Martina McBride, and Psapp—curates his third installment of Ubiquity's Studio Sessions series, in which he and his Ping Pong Orchestra bob and weave through tracks from 1960s and '70s library records (dusty wax meant to soundtrack the dingy flicks of yesteryear). Lee deftly tugs the cinematic flair out of the album's 15 cuts, breathing life into sitar-driven grooves, sneaky marimba breaks, chase-sequence drum shuffles, and ominous orchestral swells until you can almost see the notes. *Robbie Mackey*

**SICKOAKES**  
**SEAWARDS**

Type/UK/CD

This Swedish six piece fuses spooky, echoing pianos, infinity-reverberating guitar lines, and hushed percussion into an all-instrumental, narrative-soaked treatise, one that evokes expansive post-rock vistas and oceans of sound. While Godspeed You Black Emperor! and the like favor bombastic drama, Sickoakes moves forth with a quiet, consistent confidence. This album is an engulfing, ecstatic experience, best heard while drifting through the fog, slowly, slowly seawards. *Brian Paul*

**SOUND PROVIDERS**  
**LOOKING BACKWARDS: 2001-1998**

ABB/US/CD

Though they're now known as a production duo, this compilation takes a thorough look back to the turn of the century when The Sound Providers were a three-man band. Profile, their now-absent MC, boasted one of the most distinct voices around; his slightly raspy tonality was perfectly complimented by Soulo and Jay Skills's easygoing jazz- and funk-driven beats. And while it's nice to hear anthems like "Get Down" and "Who Am I" (feat. Grap Luva) revived for this collection, in retrospect, Profile's "rapping about rapping" lyrical approach on these tracks seems a bit redundant. Maybe the SPs' slimming in 2001 was meant to be. *Max Herman*

**SPOONBENDER 1.1.1**  
**STEREO TELEPATHY ACADEMY—ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK**

Helen Scarsdale Agency/US/CD

Conceived as an extension of William S. Burroughs' and Brion Gysin's "Third Mind" technique (wherein text or art is cut up and reconfigured at random to spontaneously access non-linear thought), Spoonbender 1.1.1 is not so much an I Am Spoonbender side project as a concentrated, immersive experiment. The live performance from which 1.1.1 originated consisted of a viewing of one film while spoken text from another was broadcast over it; the soundtrack was provided by the musicians themselves, improvised while watching a third film (hidden from the audience). The result, reproduced on this recording, is a disquieting meditation on telepathy, human emotions, and communion. Best listened to while horizontal with the lights out. *Alexander Posell*

**STEREO TOTAL**  
**DISCOTHEQUE**

Disko B/GER/CD

Stereo Total's Françoise Cactus and Brezel Göring might have the market cornered on quirky, party-starting electro-pop. Fusing a sexy, Miss Kittin-esque *chanson* vocal style with electroclash's irreverently messy synth-rock aesthetic, this breezy duo continues to breathe dynamic energy into electroclash's largely overstayed musical format. *Discotheque* delivers new must-have remixes of the Stereo's better-known faves, including the kitschy-cool "Mars Rendezvous" and a high-energy rendition of their mesmerizing cut "Babystrich." An illustrative example of how dance and rock genres can fuse together seamlessly in vanguard hands. *Janet Tzou*

**SUBTRACTIVELAD**  
**SUTURE**

N5MD/US/CD

Stephen Hummel has all the ingredients here for a really well-done, standard-issue experimental release—and therein lies the problem. Despite the dynamic soundscapes of "Petals," the nanobotic percussion programming of "Sleepwalker," and Hummel's arsenal of custom virtual instruments, Suture takes us down some pretty familiar

roads—where echoes of early Neo Ouija, Rephlex, and Vertical Form are repackaged and stamped "experimental." Although smoothly engineered, the balance tends to be tipped in favor of brooding synth pressure and largeness of sound, which often overshadows some of the album's truly brilliant moments. *Doug Morton*

**SUGAR MINOTT**  
**THE ROOTS LOVER: 1978-1983**

Moll-Selekta/GER/2CD

Lincoln "Sugar" Minott began his career in 1970 with the African Brothers in Western Kingston, Jamaica, before going solo in '76. He immediately found success with both his plaintive "sufferers" roots reggae as well as chocolate-coated lover's rock numbers. Hence *The Roots Lover: 1978-1983* is an apt title for this double-disc reissue set, which provides a discerning look at both of Minott's styles with each of the out-of-print single and album tracks presented "showcase" stylee (a vocal followed by a dub version). Tracks like "No Vacancy" will please '80s rub-a-dub fans, as will "Dance Hall Style," which rides the Heavenless riddim. And with remastering and restoration by Moritz von Oswald (Basic Channel), the mournful "In A Dis Ya Time" and "Thirty Pieces of Silver" are as clear as the original takes. *Tomas Palermo*

**TORTURED SOUL**  
**INTRODUCING TORTURED SOUL**

Purpose/US/CD

Somewhere far from the tourist-trapping Vegas strip, there exists a truly elegant casino, a spot beyond the imagination of the jocular *Swingers* duo. Tortured Soul would be this den of sin's house band, doling out their "we'll be here all weekend" shtick while laying down soulful grooves. Crooner John-Christian Ulrich attains a vibe akin to Jamiroquai or Prince, but mellower. Bassist JKriv, keyboardist Ethan White,



CLIPD BEAKS

**CLIPD BEAKS**  
**PREYERS**

Tigerbeat6/US/CD

There are 30 seconds that I repeatedly play on this record, where Nic Barbeln's voice becomes disembodied as he hollers along to a suave, electro-funk groove fuming out of a ghetto blaster. It's a profoundly psychedelic moment, one that makes you feel grateful just for being alive. Elsewhere on this disc, Oakland's Clipd Beaks dwells on dirges that lament life in Bush's America. They deliver an impressive take on hymnal post-rock that works the same graveyard shift as Joy Division and Unwound, as clearly heard on "Nuclear Arab" and "No Horizons." When a sublime sheen of guitar sound engulfs "Messed Up Desert" and the following "Hash Angels," the band takes things far beyond the regular scope of a Tigerbeat6 record. The often-muddled vocals on *Preyers* may occasionally distract, but Clipd Beaks' debut still shows great promise. *Cameron Macdonald*



**MICHAEL ROSE**  
**AFRICAN DUB**

M/NETH/CD

As Shakespeare noted, a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet. So it doesn't matter if this Rose calls himself Michael "Grammy" Rose (he won the 1985 award for reggae with Black Uhuru), Mykal Rose, or Mikal Roze; this veteran remains in fine form, confidently displayed on *African Dub*. Singing takes a backseat here, although bits of Rose's prophetic lyrics create stylistic ballast for many instrumental highlights. The performer line-up here would floor any serious reggae student: Dean Fraser, sax; Earl "Chinna" Smith, guitar; Style Scott and Sly Dunbar, drums; and Norman "Twinkle" Grant, percussion, to name a few. These are Jamaica's architects of dub—they know precisely what and how to play to create the spatial dynamics, echo gaps, and low frequency that make reggae the original "head" music. Add to this Rose's undiminished vocal talent, and the board work of Canadian-inna-Netherlands engineer Ryan Moore, and you get a truly dread affair. *Tomas Palermo*



and Ulrich, who doubles up on drums, create blissed-out tracks that curl around your head like cigarette smoke. *Introducing Tortured Soul* occasionally slides into hipster background music territory, but it always stays cool and classy. *Patrick Sisson*

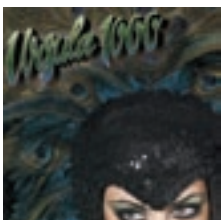
**TUNNG**  
**MOTHER'S DAUGHTER & OTHER SONGS**

*Ace Fu*/US/CD  
Thank goodness for Tunng. After countless misused applications of the ubiquitous "folktronica" tag, we finally have something truly deserving to pin it on. The Birmingham, UK duo's first LP, *Mother's Daughter & Other Songs*, moves in and out of a dreamlike haze of gentle electronic gurgles and nostalgic acoustic meanderings, shifting with moods both whimsical and melancholy. Although the pair are clearly influenced by folk legends like Bert Jansch and John Fahey, their adroit use of electronics firmly entrenches them in the here and now, yielding compelling similarities to Beta Band, The Notwist, and Múm. A beautiful and altogether poignant look back to the future. *Steve Marchese*



**URSULA 1000**  
**HERE COMES TOMORROW**

*ESL Music*/US/CD  
Alex Gimeno is a man with some serious personality disorders. Fortunately, when Gimeno steps into the studio as Ursula 1000, we, the listeners, get to benefit from his sketchy-at-best view of the world in general. Yeah, he's schizophrenic: check out the side-by-side Prince-esque shagger ("Elektrik Boogie") and Jamaica-'66 skanker ("Two Tone Rocka") for proof. But more importantly, Gimeno is solipsistic: whether it's retro-mod-inspired dancefloor action ("Boop") or straight-up glam rock ("Hello! Let's Go to a Disco")—not to mention Latin, hip-hop, etc.—Ursula 1000 makes genres his own, culling a cohesive album out of bizarro-world diversity. *Justin Hopper*



**VAKILL**  
**WORST FEARS CONFIRMED**

*Molemen*/US/CD  
On his sophomore album, Vakill unleashes vivid, street-level raps without playing the role of the gangster or corner hustler like so many on the mic do. While his Molemen crewmates provide the dramatic instrumentals, this commanding MC unflinchingly rhymes for everyone in the struggle—especially in his native Chicago. When not warning listeners to avoid getting trapped by the ills of life, he throws in just enough bragging and boasting for good measure (see his scorching collaboration with Ras Kass, "Introducin"). With the strength of this record, Vakill's name will be one to look for this year. *Max Herman*

**VITALIC**  
**OK COWBOY**

*PIAS*/US/CD  
Publicly evasive Frenchman Pascal Arbez, who debuted as Vitalic in 2001, furthers the ramping legacy of expansive electronic composers from Moroder and Vangelis to Daft Punk. His four-years-in-the-making full-length debut couples jacking squelches with more genially jaunty, almost plaintive synths, thus transcending the singular profile of his monolithic, unrelentingly insistent singles ("Poney Part 1," "La Rock," "My Friend Dario") already etched across dancefloors worldwide. While the entire album isn't as flushed out as these effusive anchors, *Cowboy's* more meditative, mottled productions never play second cousin. These 13 resonant analog emulsions will maintain Arbez's rightful presence in the public/mind's eye. *Tony Ware*

**KEITH FULLERTON WHITMAN**  
**LISBON**

*Kranky*/US/CD  
Undoubtedly, each successive Keith Fullerton Whitman release could be considered as intellectual as it is textural. There's a place for academia when discussing Whitman's regurgitative electro-acoustic processing, but it becomes secondary to the immersive music's emotive modulation. This 41-minute DSP/analog abstraction—captured live to hard disk in Lisbon in early October 2005—states and reinstates itself as the most intentionally direct, least studio-distilled and obsessed-over release of the tonal poet's catalogue. A dewy diffusion of sublime sine harmonic flocs and granular gauze, *Lisbon* is an unhurried unfurling of muted melodies, proving an un-retouched glimpse into Whitman's arterial modus. *Tony Ware*

**WOODEN WAND AND THE VANISHING VOICE**  
**THE FLOOD**

*Troubleman Unlimited*/US/CD  
*Gipsy Freedom*  
*5RC*/US/CD  
Although Wooden Wand and the Vanishing Voice get tagged with the "avant-folk" label everywhere they turn, they most certainly deviate from the path of Devendra Banhart and his legion of free-spirited clones. *The Flood* finds the collective summoning ancient spirits with bass-heavy, acoustic arrangements and walls of noise pummeling all of the space in between, while *Gipsy Freedom* is the liberating essence of free jazz and haunting prog-folk. With both albums, however, the tone rarely varies, drifting from one existential ballad to the next, all the while maintaining the earthy spirits of Joan Baez and gypsies everywhere. *Fred Miketa*

**TOM ZÉ**  
**ESTUDANDO O PAGODE**

*Luaka Bop*/US/CD  
Brazilian vocalist Tom Zé has had a long journey, from helping to forge his country's revolutionary sound, tropicalia, to a recent career resurgence spurred by David Byrne's Luaka Bop label. Nearing 70, Zé continues what he's best known for: fighting a rebellion against gravity in the form of song. *Estudando O Pagode*, an unfinished operetta devoted to women's rights, borrows from rock and samba while weaving in kazoos, children's choirs, and a homemade instrument made from a ficus tree. Tiptoeing up to the taboo—and keeping deep subjects interesting, even enjoyable—proves to be Zé's lifelong legacy. *Derek Beres*

**HARALD SACK ZIEGLER**  
**PUNKT**

*Staubgold*/GER/CD  
One half of child's-play-pop purveyors Sack & Blumm, as well as a frequent Mouse On Mars collaborator, German tape scene pillar Harald Sack Ziegler's scatterbrained solo sound seems to hail from a toy workshop where punk, ska, electronic, and folk music compete for equal time on the hi-fi. *Punkt*, a 22-track album comprising the illustrious Cologne-based musician's previously vinyl/cassette-only work, is a frothy collection of wonkacious woodwinds, slapstick samples, funk snippets, crashing drums, and steely guitars all stamped with Ziegler's distinctively oscillating vocals. A frantic romp indeed, Ziegler succeeds by imbuing every nook and cranny of his sound with a quirky, ear-perking catchiness. *James Jung*



**SHALABI EFFECT**

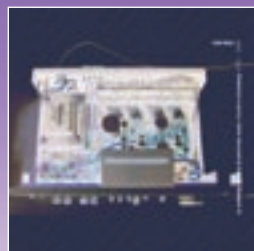
**SHALABI EFFECT**  
**UNFORTUNATELY**

*Alien8*/CAN/CD  
In recent years, being a band from Montreal has often equaled instant publicity. Despite having produced some of the most forward-thinking music of the last 10 years, however, Montreal's Shalabi Effect has remained relatively unnoticed. The group's latest effort, *Unfortunately*, is the result of a three-day residency at Montreal's Arts Inter Culturels institute, where the songs were rehearsed and recorded in front of a live audience. "Out of the Closet," the epic 13-minute opener, presses through walls of found sound and drone to "Pai Nai," an exploration of surf rock and static. Similarly, a balance between haunting noise and graceful melody is explored through the strings in "Half Life" and "Vegas Radiation." A focused jaunt through many psychedelic corridors, *Unfortunately* is a masterful work that will probably find hype 10 years from now, when the rest of the world catches up. *Josiah Hughes*



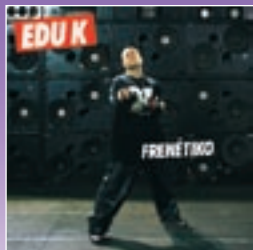
**CONSIDERATE BUILDERS SCHEME**  
**Exit To Riverside** CD/2LP

The latest album from **Combination Records**. Cape Town's Justin De Nobrega makes kickin' beats surrounded by electronic technique. What **Prefuse 73** would sound like if he grew up in the Bronx 1982. Head-nodding backpack beats with robot-drawl, dense electrofunk and street bounce. **Break dancing for Blade Runners**.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**An Anthology Of Noise & Electronic Music Volume 4** 2CD

The fourth volume of Sub Rosa's **highly-acclaimed** and successful series. This installment contains 75% **rare tracks** from true cultural instigators in the field of **electronic sound**. Including new creations from **China, Brazil, Norway and Hungary**, as well as material from legends like **Ligeti, Lucier** and very rare documents from **Robert Wyatt** and **François Bayle**.



**EDU K**  
**Frenético** CD

The first artist album from **Brazil's baile funk** scene. **Edu K** is the true Don of **funk carioca**. More than the electro-funk sound, Edu K adds **reggaeton, punk funk** and **Cuban** forms to the Brazilian booty bounce recipe and the result is strictly massive. Contains the now worldwide smash hit "Popozuda Rock n' Roll." **K-Fed** needs to step off.



**LINDSTROM & PRINS THOMAS**  
**S/T** CD/3LP

Already the subject of an **XLR8R** article, Norway's **discoid duo** could hardly be any more flammable. **Dominique Leone** (**Pitchfork**) calls their groovy space disco sound "*perfectly contemporary*" and "Forelepig Bit" "*the quintessential space disco track*." The accolades are pouring in as we speak. Luscious, lascivious, late-nite loveliness.



**DELL & FLÜGEL**  
**Superstructure** CD/LP

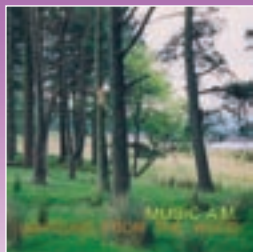
When you create two of the biggest singles of 2005, **Alter Ego's** "Rocker" and "Geht's Noch?" what do you do for an encore? If you are **Roman Flügel** you release a genre-defying vibraphone CD of course! The other half, **Christopher Dell**, is a world-respected vibraphonist: together it's all complexity, high-class and complex chill out choons.



**SUPERSILENT**  
**7** DVD

Finally, the return of the quartet that strides over Norwegian jazz. **Supersilent** resumes in glorious DVD format with a concert recorded by multimedia artist **Kim Hiorthøy**. 109 minutes, six tracks of fitful concrète, jazztronic **collapse-core** for a visceral music experience unlike anything else on DVD. Hailed worldwide, **Supersilent is back and roaring!**

rune grammofon



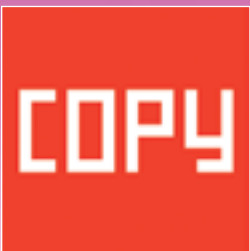
**MUSIC A.M.**  
**Unwound from the Wood** CD

This is music from **Volker Bertelmann** (aka **Hauschka**) and **Stefan Schneider** (to **Rococo Rot**), vocals and lyrics by Scottish author **Luke Sutherland** (**Long Fin Killie, Mogwai**). Mature electro-pop with wind sections, guitar themes and sophisticated rhythms. "*One of the more truly exciting electronic pop hybrids in recent memory.*" — **Tiny Mix Tapes**



**MIKE SHANNON**  
**Possible Conclusions To Stories That Never End** CD/2LP

One of the luminaries of the Canadian scene, alongside **Akufen, Deadbeat** and **Pan/Tone**, **Mike Shannon** helped found labels like **Revolver** and **Cynosure**. This is his first full-length after *Slight Of Hand* (Force Inc., 2002) is a fierce comeback. Shannon's vocal productions here are an inspired diversion from his minimal-techno aesthetic. Groovy.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Do You Copy? 2** CD

**Scandinavia** so hot right now. Now 5 years old, **Mitek** is Sweden's home for electronic sound: from **experimental tech-house** to **abstract minimalism**. For their anniversary, the label invited a host of visionaries to remix their catalog. **Midaicondo, Jay Haze, Johan Skugge, Hakan Lidbo, Smyglyssna, Plug, Anders Ilar** and many more.



**GUITAR**  
**Tokyo** CD

The follow-up to the critically-acclaimed, **My Bloody Valentine**-inspired *Sunkissed* CD on Morr Music ("*[A] breath of fresh air.*" — **Pitchfork**). *Tokyo* is a direct melding of traditional Japanese music and modern electronic production. Featuring vocals from **Ayako Akashiba**. Chill-out music for your meditative daydream. Real, real pretty.

onitor



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**One Naughty Night in Berlin** CD/2LP

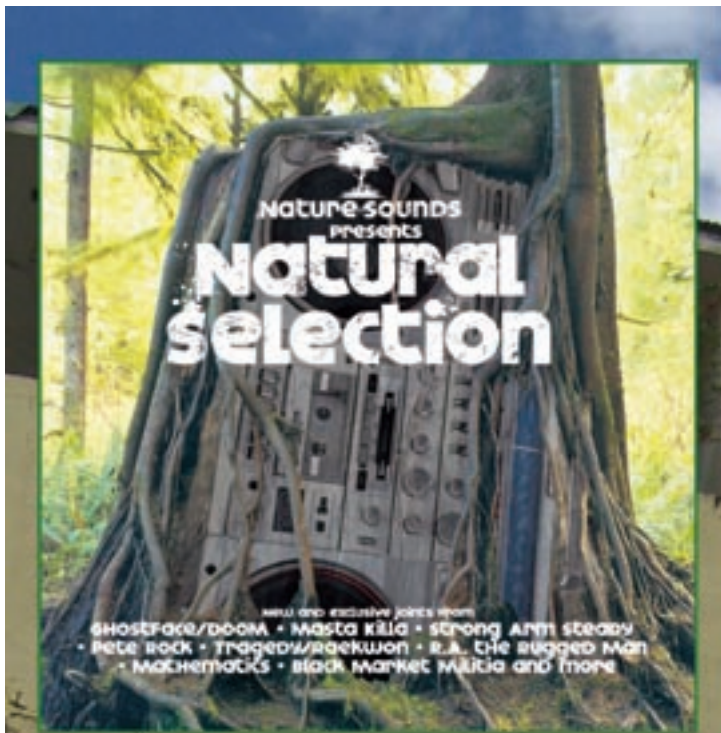
One of the world's most respected DJs, **DJ Naughty** (aka **Filippo Moscatello**) lays out his first mix CD for **Eskimo Recordings**. This brilliant 23-track mix includes the **Mary Jane Girls, Chikinki, Vitalic, M.A.N.D.Y.** vs. **Booka Shade** alongside remixers like **Carl Craig, Tiga, Glimmers** and **Ewan Pearson**. Tip!



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**African Rebel Music — Roots Reggae & Dancehall** CD

Best sellers throughout the continent, here is the first international release for **17 different** African reggae artists. From **Ethiopia to Gambia**, from **South Africa to Mauritania**, there is a movement towards **ragga, reggae** and **dancehall** riddims. Comes with a **24-page** book on this astonishing cross-section of the very latest in African reggae sounds.

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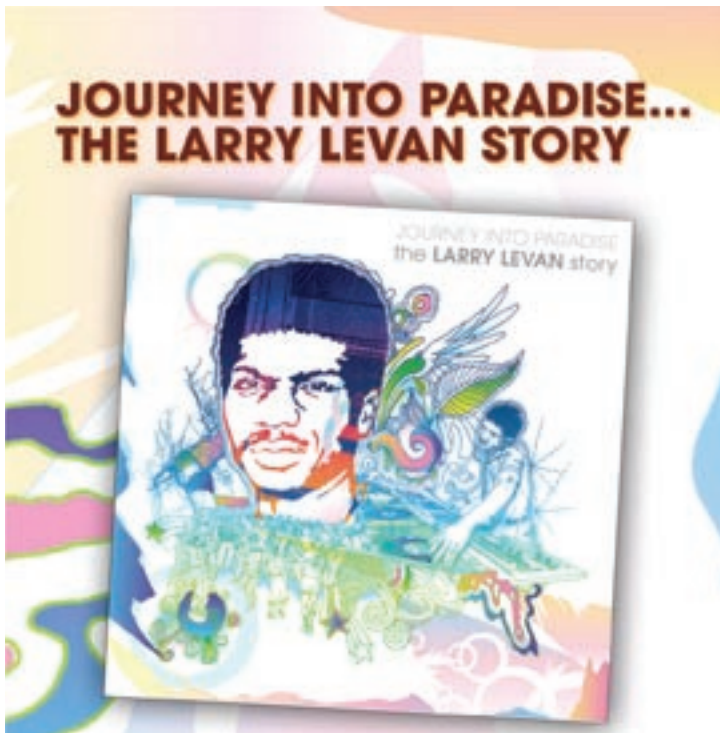


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**BLACK MARKET MILITIA**  
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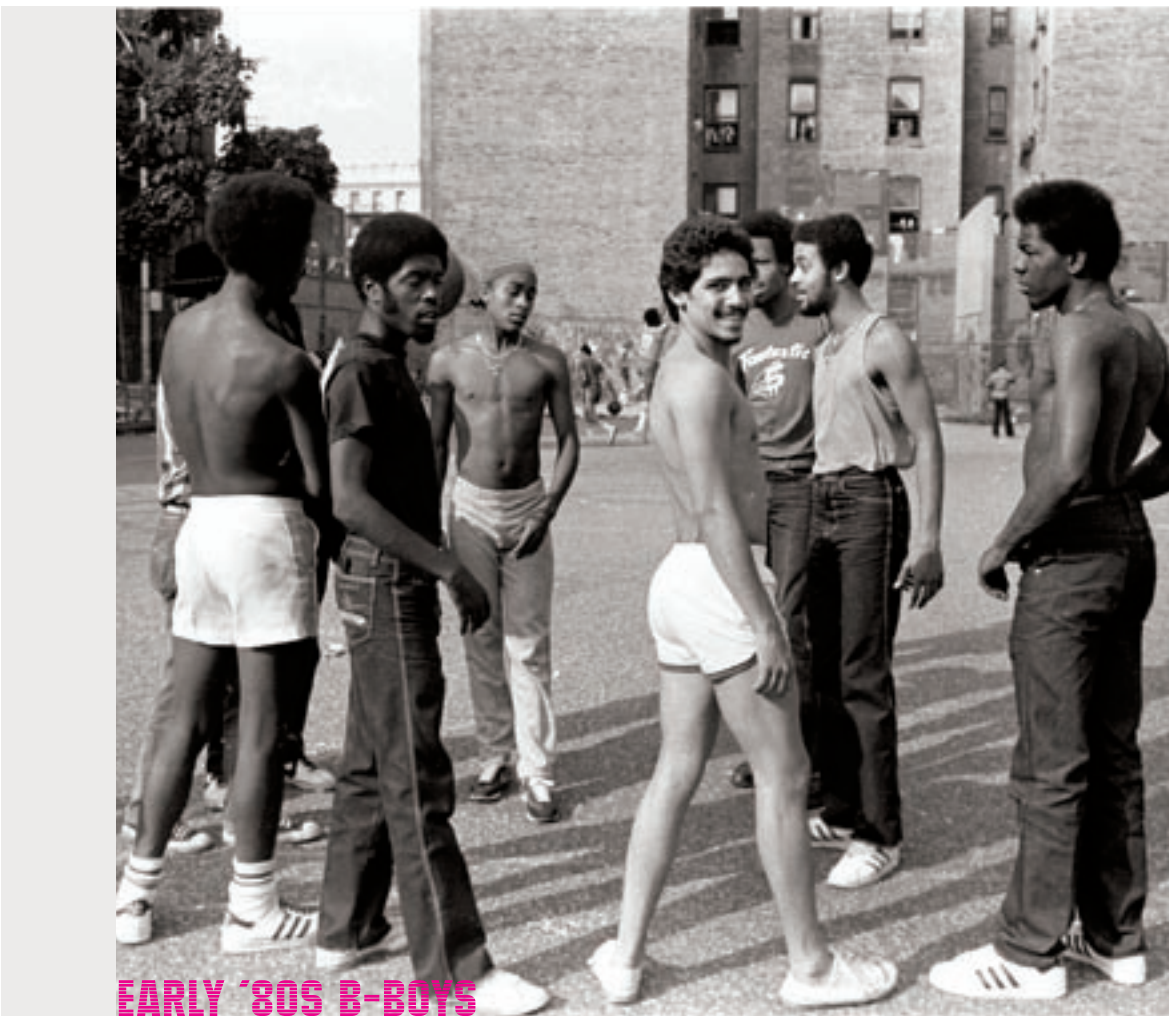
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EARLY '80S B-BOYS

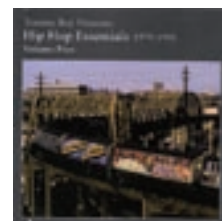
## COMP REVIEWS

**RUN THE ROAD VOL. 2**  
 Vice/US/CD

**HIP-HOP ESSENTIALS 1979-1991**  
**VOL. 5**  
 Tommy Boy/US/CD

**BIG APPLE RAPPIN': THE EARLY DAYS**  
**OF HIP-HOP CULTURE IN NEW YORK**  
**CITY 1979-1982**  
 Soul Jazz/UK/CD

**HEAVY MECKLE**  
 Baked Goods/UK/CD



**SIGN O' THE TIMES?**  
**AUGHTIES GRIME**  
**MEETS '80S RHYME.**

When JME warns his fellow UK grime MCs not to succumb to the violence and gangsta-ism of their own lyrics on "Serious," his twister-spitting tongue must at least dip into his cheek when he raps: "Just cos we come from the gutter/Don't mean we have to be sinners/Major labels don't want killers." JME's reasoning behind his cry for peace is largely financial: labels want you to talk the talk, but not wield the shank. But there's another side to the scene that shows up throughout *Run the Road Vol. 2*, the follow-up compilation to last year's disc showcasing the UK's explosive grime scene to the world. After the success of *Run the Road's* class of '05—Dizze Rascal, Wiley, Kano, Lady Sovereign—2006's MCs see possibilities that their predecessors may not have dreamt of. Let's get serious, the grimeys figure...and "don't say my name if you're not payin' me."

In 2005, grime found itself at the top of the UK charts, and peeping into the ranks of world hip-hop's elite. In 2006, the genre finds itself on the verge of commercial explosion—and musical flatlining. When JME talks about getting "Serious," he's not referring to Plan B's bizarrely bloodthirsty acoustic-guitar rap "Sick 2 Def," but Low Deep's anthemic "Get Set," with its brutal honesty: "This is the New Age grime/Who's gonna be next with 16 lines?" Who's got the new t'ing that sounds like the old t'ing blasting hourly on BBC One?

It's the repeat of a process you can watch in time-lapse audio

snapshots on Tommy Boy's *Hip-Hop Essentials 1979-1991* series, which documents hip-hop history up to the gangsta age. In the fifth volume of the series, it's easy to see hip-hop transform from a music innovating from outside any known system (Funky 4+1's "That's the Joint," Grandmaster Flash's "Freedom") into plodding, paint-by-numbers tracks that began to follow established rules (World Famous Supreme Team's "Hey DJ"). Eventually, though, the likes of De La Soul and Jungle Brothers found new ways to bend those rules and make them fresh.

That grime is still in its early days—beholden as much to its pirate-radio roots as to the "Yankee managers"—is evidenced on DJs Shadetek and Sheen's mixtape *Heavy Meckle*. Here, 41 riddims by some of the music's biggest producers (Jon E Cash, Jammer) are ridden, pirate-style, by a team of MCs led by *Run the Road* alum Ears. *Heavy Meckle's* ratchet-sharp beats and electrifying freestyles hark back to the UK's previous indigenous creation—drum & bass—and, in a historic sense, to hip-hop's dawning in late '70s New York City, when everything was fair game.

For the direct spiritual forefather to Lethal B spitting over Kylie Minogue on *Meckle*, try *Big Apple Rappin'*, a two-disc set of somewhat lesser-known early hip-hop recordings from the music's Mesozoic period. Cuts like Brother D & the Collective Effort's "How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise" take the era's disco and funk from party anthems to radical political statements—and back again.

That being said, *RTR2* is still a great document of grime's current crop. But if the streets' grime paths become more and more mapped out, it might not be long before the music's fans are tsk'ing and talking about "back in the day"—even if that "day" was just a few paychecks ago. *Justin Hopper*

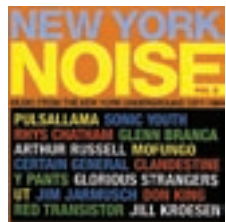


GLENN BRANCA

**NEW YORK NOISE VOL. 2: MUSIC FROM THE NEW YORK UNDERGROUND 1977-1984**

Soul Jazz/UK/CD

Soul Jazz's second excursion through New York's No Wave years features an embryonic (and shockingly awful) Sonic Youth as well as early material from avant-garde überlords Glenn Branca and Rhys Chatham and a considerably more obscure cast that includes Eliot Sharp's first band, Mofungo, Nicky Siano and Arthur Russell's one-off collaboration as Felix, and the Del Byzantines (featuring a young Jim Jarmusch). While most of the acts put forth noisy skronk that's somewhat inferior to similar acts on the first *New York Noise* installment (Mars, DNA, Theoretical Girls), there are a handful of rhythmic steppers sure to get hipster panties wet, namely Felix's "Black Box Disco" and "Tigerstripes" and Clandestine's "Radio Rhythm." *Jesse Serwer*



**BABY GODZILLA**

Daly City/US/CD

Daly City Records (that's the mighty Mochipet and crew) goes all glitched-out, crunk, and smiley on *Baby Godzilla*, with 20 cuts of laid-back yacht-hop tweaked through the prism of Schematic or Skam, but with a distinctive West Coast vibe that recalls *Deep Concentration*-era Om. Stand-out cuts from Eustation and Edit keep things popping but all the material from Spaceheater, Mophono, Daedelus, and Mr. Mochi himself is sure to bring a smile. This is the record for your next gallery opening and/or backyard barbecue—if both Burt Bacharach and MF Doom are in attendance. *Matt Earp*

**BRAZILIAN LOUNGE**

Putumayo/US/CD

Call them world music's equivalent to Starbucks if you must, but there's no denying that Putumayo has mastered the art of the compilation. Their new *Brazilian Lounge* disc has all the label's trademarks—a mix of artists both familiar and unfamiliar to Western audiences, a range of stylistic expression within a basic framework (chilled downtempo Brasilelectro), and a nice sense of thematic continuity throughout. The fevered pulse of samba and sensual rhythms of bossa nova may have been urbanized and updated yet they remain rooted in Amazon jungle-derived tropical vibes. Amongst a solid track list, bells



and whistles are provided here by Bid (with Seu Jorge), Bebel Gilberto (via King Britt), and Bossacucanova (with Adriana Calcanhotto). While perhaps not the edgiest South American compilation you'll hear this year, *Brazilian Lounge* will definitely go down smoothly with a capirinha or three. *Eric K. Arnold*

**DELON & DALCAN: PICTURE OF NOW**

Scandium/FRA/CD

For their latest collaborative effort, the French duo of Greg Delon and André Dalcan (a.k.a. Ultracolor) presents a comprehensive sampling of the electro-house genre (featuring known labels like Systematic, Get Physical, and Boxer Sport), and provides a solid compilation for any fan of the genre. From track to track, the listener is kept alert: transitions seem effortless, shifting between Nathan Fake's bouncy dancefloor numbers to the ethereal melodies of Chelonis R. Jones, then onward to sharper, harder rhythms appropriate for dark rooms in the wee hours of the morning. *Jennifer Marston*

**DJ CAM: REVISITED BY**

Inflamable-Recall/US/CD

With names like DJ Vadim and Lord Finesse involved in this remix project, expectations are naturally going to run astronomically high. Good news is, nearly every participant manages to rework the music of French instrumentalist DJ Cam without a hitch. From DJ Premier's soulful boom-bap take on "Voodoo Child" (featuring Afu Ra) to the jazzy drum & bass version of "Innervisions" by Flytronix, Cam's work gets nothing less than the royal treatment. After 10 years of crafting hip-hop-inspired instrumentals, Cam certainly deserves it. *Max Herman*

**FILA BRAZILLIA: THE GARDEN COMPILATION VOLUME 1**

Ménart/UK/CD

Like contemporaries Kruder & Dorfmeister and Funky Porcini, the duo of Steve Cobby and Dave McSherry combined off-kilter "car-boot" samples, dub bass, hip-hop drum programming, and lush electronic stylings with their ingenious compositions. Fila Brazillia has always straddled the line between dancefloor and headphone music, a region Cobby explores again on *The Garden Compilation*. Tracks like Moma Gravey's "Blue String Pudding" and Height of Abraham's "Everybody Knows" are deftly mixed into the gorgeous house of K-Tee Kennedy and FB's own weirdo-funk tracks with signature titles like "Furball Shindig." Have a listen and a laugh. *Tomas Palermo*

**FREERANGE RECORDS COLOUR SERIES: RED 03**

Freerange/UK/CD

Ah, it's those Brits again, inserting that extra "u" into the word "color"—but we'll forgive them since they invented English (America *perfected* it) and because this comp is so damn good. The label turns 10 this year and has gelled into a consistent home for tech-driven underground house and breaky leftfield dance tracks, all impressively engineered and mastered. *Red 03* captures the best recent singles from Only Freak, Mike Monday, Square One, and Audiomontage while tossing in exclusives, remixes, and one-offs from King Kooba, Kirk Degiorgio, Pam Skin, and Troydon. If your ears fancy cut-up house antics like Switch's "Just Bounce To This" or the cool dub effects of Deepchild's Square One "High Rise" remix then *Red 03* is exactly the *flavour* you're seeking. *Tomas Palermo*

**GLOBAL COMMUNICATION: FABRIC 26**

Fabric/UK/CD

The latest installment of the apparently endless Fabric series brings in Tom Middleton and Mark Pritchard (a.k.a. Global Communication). Previously the Jedi Knights (Hi, George Lucas. Please don't sue me.), the two put together an album that jumps genres constantly. Hip-hop and broken-beat dominate, like the stuttering "Now U Know" by MED and Dudley Perkins, but it's hard to call this a genre album—not with the inclusion of tracks like the warmly instrumental "Aura" from Motorcitysoul and the danceable deep house of Shur-i-kan's "Living Inside." The common denominator, though, is the mix's outstanding quality. *Luciana Lopez*

**THE HERBALISER: FABRICLIVE 26**

Fabric/UK/CD

The Herbaliser's tastes run deep through hip-hop's most embedded followers and profound influences; Jake Wherry and Ollie Teeba weave something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and all things funky into a house party-ready format. The track selection is excellent—from current raves like J. Sands (of Lone Catalysts) and Breakestra to forefathers like Eric B. and Rakim, James Brown, and Jackson 5—and the mixing is impeccable. But, even as a funky club mix, Herbaliser's *Fabriclive* installment is almost *too* relentless. As good as it is, one can't help feeling that the duo could have taken it half a step further and made the mix their own. *Justin Hopper*

**MICHNA VS. WOODMAN: METAL ON METAL**

TTLMS/US/CD

Can they mix it? Yes, they can! Snoop? Check. MAW? Check. Daft Punk? Yup. Primus? Sure. Lionel Richie? Yes, in fact. Vengaboys? Well, uh, them, too. Turntable Lab's favorite sons have created something truly wonderful and ludicrously fun in a style for which Coldcut and then Diplo opened the door. You might know Michna as Egg Foo Young from the Touchin' Bass label (electro's guiding light) but after Kraftwerk's "The Model" turns into Big Black's cover of the same track, one senses that they can end up anywhere. Thankfully Adrian and Woody are capable guides. *Matt Earp*

**MISSTRESS BARBARA: COME WITH ME...**

Uncivilized World/US/CD

Mixing a bit of techno and a bit of house is an endeavor best left to experienced hands. For Canada-based Misstress Barbara, tech-house is a dish best served hard. Her selection represents an international roster of leftfield technicians crafting percolating sounds and undulating ambiance, and she strings their songs together with expert precision. Whether it's the dirty, funky electro of Zdar's "Don't U Want" or the intense, atmospheric techno of Donnacha Costello's "Rusty Sticks," the seductive afterhours vibe is unmistakable. Adventurous dancefloor thrillseekers, let the Misstress' hands guide you. *Velanche*

**?UESTLOVE: BABIES 2—MISERY STRIKES BACK—NO MORE BABIES**

BBE/UK/CD

In a double slap of irony, Roots maestro ?uestlove issued this melancholy antithesis to his 2002 collection of amorous old school gems, *Babies Makin' Babies*, on Valentine's Day. Gleaning vintage R&B and soul from his vast vinyl collection (listen closely for snaps, crackles, and pops), ?uestlove compiles a 12-track pity party for the broken hearted that bounces from ethereal ballads like Syreeta's "Cause We've Ended As Lovers" to Betty Davis' vampy funk/rock juggernaut "Anti Love Song." While the disc packs some great grooves, it has all the sentiment of a tear-stained breakup letter. Stick to flowers and candy. *Rico "Superbizzee" Washington*

**RCOLA: JUNGLXPEDITIONS**

Wikkid/CAN/CD

RCola has become a stalwart in the small but flourishing new school ragga jungle community (and no, don't confuse it with current D&B scene!). Ragga junglists know him both through his productions and his tireless work for his distro company from which this mix takes its name. Here are 12 of his original tracks and remixes in their entirety, not mixed so much as smoothly presented. RCola definitely has a bit of a pop streak in him, and there's no Soundmurderer-styled productions present. With seven MCs lending toasting talent, the vibe is more bubbliin' than clash. *Matt Earp*

**SATOSHI TOMIIE: RENAISSANCE PRESENTS 3D**

Renaissance/UK/CD

Tomiie launches Renaissance's newest line of compilation mixes, grounded in a simple premise—3D equals three discs: Club, Studio, and Home. Club has all the build and flow of a non-stop progressive house night, while the somewhat less-banging Studio draws heavily on Tomiie's own work, such as his remixes of Chab's "Lover" and Kosheen's "Hungry." Home, in contrast, goes for a mix of funk and trip-hop, like Sneaker Pimps' "Six Underground." Not radically innovative, but Tomiie's skilled enough to keep things moving and interesting. *Luciana Lopez*

**SUTEKH: CONTEXT UNRAVELED**

Context Free Media/US/CD

An invaluable, brightly packaged introduction to the formidable and dignified techno superlabel, Context Free Media boss Sutekh weaves a perfect 27-track tapestry of sound rather than just lazily flaunting the label's vinyl-only back catalog. Featuring techno's most bold-faced names, often in their earliest appearances (Kit Clayton, Murcof, Matmos, Portable, Safety Scissors, and Timeblind all appear), this is the majestic sound of electronics unraveling and unraveling, a beautiful fugue of dubbed percussion and swirling whirlwinds of melody with fervid bouts of downtempo introspection and IDM uprocking occasionally leading the charge. *Brian Paul*

**TRAVELLER TCHEQUE**

Ozore Age/FRA/CD-DVD

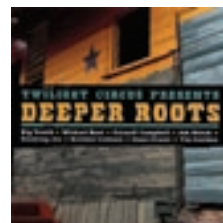
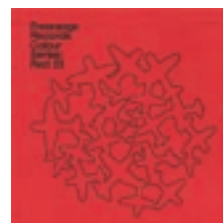
*Traveller Tchegue* is a nostalgia trip back to early '90s hardcore rave culture (think Industrial Strength on really bad acid). This CD/DVD compilation featuring hardcore French mavericks Les Boucles Etranges and Mem Pamal is a poor attempt at

resurrecting glowstick dance-a-thons and tribal-themed outlaw parties. Recommended only for the headstrong, enjoy nonstop bass and 180BPMs with cheesy outer-space noises and drum & bass rolls—you know the rest. Save yourself the grief and just pick up an old Frankie Bones record instead. *Esta Park*

**TWILIGHT CIRCUS PRESENTS DEEPER ROOTS**

M/NETH/CD

Classic reggae and vinyl are often synonymous, archaic brothers of the same seed. When labels pick obscure 45s for digital release, the producer's integrity is key. Fortunately Ryan Moore is a proper guide. This collection of classic tracks by a host of sidemen (Dean Fraser, Vin Gordon) and a few more recognizable names (Michael Rose, Big Youth) results in an excellent companion to—as the title suggests—deep roots listening. The Megadub Mix of Black Uhuru frontman Michael Rose's "Throw Some Stone" closes the record with a hint of futurism, a fitting end to a sojourn through reggae's lesser-known halls. *Derek Beres*



**IDOL TRYOUTS VOL. 2**

Ghostly International/US/CD

Three years after the emblematic *Idol Tryouts* comp, this new double disc—a company progress report of sorts—displays Ghostly's vibrant growth. Disc one spotlights the imprint's idiosyncratically roaming "Avant Pop" bent. Skeletons & The Girl-Faced Boys solidify their maverick status with an oddly endearing song that glitters and splutters like a hideously beautiful new species of pop, and Daniel Wang offers bleeping, star-dusted electro-disco euphoria. Label linchpins Matthew Dear and Dabrye predictably proffer new gems. Disc two (entitled "SMM") reflects Ghostly's more experimental inclinations, with stunning results. The pastoral end of digitalia represents strongly with Greg Davis, Kiln, Aeroc, and Christopher Willits. When heavies like Richard Devine, Tim Hecker, and Terre Thaemlitz don't even deliver the best tracks, you know you have a deep bench. *Dave Segal*



**BUBBLE METROPOLIS**  
BY ML TRONIK  
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



This month's techno trek begins in—where else?—Berlin, that red-hot hometown of the remarkably mysterious Careless Records artists **Gui.tar**. Their impressive three-track 12", "Push in the Bush," is a fusion of minimal techno and indie rock-style bass guitar with surprising depth for the dancefloor.

Not as quite as deep, but just as dirty (yeah, I said it) is **Manic Mind**. Their EP, *Minimal Shit*, tells it like it is with the refrain, "Everybody's looking for the minimal shit" in the title track—odd, considering that both burners on this record are of the tough, techno-synth funk variety. Another surprise this month was **Phil Stumpf's** "Even Steven" release on Finland's Frozen North Recordings. See, techno can still be funky and melodic. This record is a definite grower; check the b-side for the **Jussi-Pekka** remix.

**Peter Grummich** follows up his Ghostly release with the *Rave D'Amour* EP on Shitkatapult. This guy must love bass. Those characteristically bombing sounds are back to give your lower g.i. a little massage. Skip the a-side and go directly for the b's, "Weiter" and "Breathe;" the latter is an old school-informed, 122-BPM acid workout done in a buzzy-bass style. Good record; bad name for a record label.

There are two outstanding releases from Poland's **Jacek Sienkiewicz** that you should be on the lookout for. The pair of cuts on *Double Secret* (P&C Recognition) move forward like humanoid arpeggiators, wrapping their melodies around you and unfolding in different ways over and over again. Next, the remixes to his "Time Starts Now" dive deep and stay submerged in a techno-drenched murk. The standout is **Pier Buccini's** remix—a slow builder great for late-night dancefloor detonation. And no, I don't know how to pronounce his name either.

If you like it deep and dark with a futuristic edge, watch for **Ellen Allien's** "Down" remix 12" on her own Bpitch Control. It features one of my favorite remix crews at the moment, Italy's **Drama Society**.

On a recent trip to Detroit I spent some time at Planet E with the one and only **Carl Craig**. I was brave enough to coax him into burning me a CD-R containing some upcoming remixes and re-edits, including everything from the oft-talked about 10-minute-plus "Relevee" remix to new interpretations of Hugh Masekela and old disco.

Also radiating from the austere ruins of America's seventh city: the 10th anniversary of **Jeff Mills'** classic "The Bells." It's been re-released on Axis in its relentless glory alongside two re-edits of "Gift of the Hills" and "Circus." Ten years? Really? More on the D tip: Keep an eye out for new the new full-length from **Underground Resistance**, *Interstellar Fugitives 2*, featuring tracks from **Mad Mike**, **Suburban Knight**, and many others.

Finally, it's **John Selway's Neurotic Drum Band** and their anthem "We're Gonna Rock New York" (Plant). This one's like an intergalactic laser battle waged between the five boroughs; it's fun, funky, and the remix is pure acid. You'd better go find this.



**WARM SPEAKERS**  
BY COLIN NAGY  
HOUSE MUSIC AND ITS EXTENDED VARIATIONS



Fresh from releasing a lovely compilation of recent remixes and previously vinyl-only releases (*Compost 200: Freshly Composted*), Munich masterminds Compost offer up *Black Label 05*, featuring **Flowerz**, **Matt Flores**, and hip-house originator **Tyree Cooper**. The a-side's sound is deep and piano-driven, while Cooper shows his influence on the flip with a touch of late '80s Chicago (and a kiss of acid for good measure).

One of my favorite New York labels, **Ezekiel Honig's** Microcosm Music, is releasing *Macrofun Vol. 4*, featuring tracks by **soundsound** and **Krill Minima**. Side one is full of painstakingly detailed microhouse bathed in ambient tones; the flip, while still subtle, is the more floor-friendly of the two with a sharply pronounced bassline swing. And as a follow up to Honig's *Early Morning Migrations* album, the label is releasing the first in a set of remix EPs—the "Socks and Sandals" re-rub is a standout.

The consistently strong London-based Freerange label just released "I Want It," featuring **Shur-I-Kan** versus deep leftfield house artist **Milton Jackson**. The record is standard-issue Freerange—soulful and jazzy, with the funky quotient raised by a Moog bassline. On top of that, the imprint is also rolling out the third installment of their *Colour* compilations series, showcasing highlights from the past year and other exclusive cuts. Works out well for those of us who have to have **Switch's** "Just Bounce to This" on their iPods.

Deep Space Media, the label face of **Francois K's** Monday night NYC party of the same name, puts the evening to vinyl with the **Beat Pharmacy** release "Here To Go (Club Dub)," a dubbed-out deep house cut that surely sounds divine on Cielo's warm sound system.

Other recent highlights include: **Lanoiraudé's** *Paris Beatdown* EP (Dial), which he calls "a tribute to the beat-down sound of Detroit;" Berlin-based **Oliver Koletzki's** "Da Bleibt Er Ganz Cool" (Kling Klang), a tense electro-house cut, replete with a remix from **Silversurfer**; and **Zen-Kei's** "The Blast" (Good Stuff). The latter is one to keep an eye out for, though it's been out for a bit. It straddles the ground between house and techno, but after listening to the bomb that is the original mix, you won't be discussing the subtleties of genre—the floor beckons.

On the album tip, the folks at soulful deep house label Chillfunk have assembled the CD compilation *Ten Years... The Best Of 1996 - 2006*, which includes **Kenny Dope's** take on **Nathan Haines'** "Believe." A limited-edition 12" release will coincide, with formerly deleted tracks like Phil Asher's remix of **T.Kolai's** "Zouk" returning to the fold.

Though not technically straight-up house, sit tight for new music from **Mathew Jonson's** **Cobblestone Jazz** project. The trio's jazz arrangements have a warm, Detroit-imbued vibe, and they're known for their impressive improvised performances. Wagon Repair label cofounder **Graham Boothby** said he recently put the music on in a crowded restaurant and had several people of all ages ask him about it. Perhaps this is the perfect inclusion for your mixtape? Why not convert your house-hating friends...



**Global Communication**  
fabric 26  
Available now

Tom Middleton and Mark Pritchard are the electronic pioneers known as Global Communication. They make beautiful, emotive soundscapes using their signature twisted sounds. "Fabric 26" is a fusion of styles with standout tracks from Dabrye, Trickski, Motorcitysoul, Solid Groove, Shur-I-Kan, Soul Mekanik and Artec.



**The Herbaliser**  
FABRICLIVE 26  
Available now

Jake and Ollie are established as one of UK hip hop's most innovative and reliable production teams. Featuring their own productions along-side tracks from Rjd2, DJ Format, James Brown, Eric B & Rakim, The Roots, Diplo and Bugz in the Attic, this mix shows the duo's love of beats, soul and funk.



**Matthew Dear as Audion**  
fabric 27  
Available 04.25.06

On "fabric 27", Ghostly International's Matthew Dear dispenses with the pleasantries and hammers the sound system under his Audion alias. Dark grooves pour from the speakers in a state of the art techno mix.



**DJ FORMAT**  
FABRICLIVE 27  
Available 05.16.06

FABRICLIVE 27 comes from arch party starter DJ Format. It's a blend of hot, heavy hip hop and funk from the likes of Cut Chemist and Coldcut, through to the soulful vocals of Ella Fitzgerald and Cleo Lane, Jimmy Smith and Ananda Shankar – this is a mix you can't stop nodding your head at.

Forthcoming artists in the series:

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Cool Nutz



Coo Coo Cal

New York hip-hop's been declared dead for a while now. While I'm left wondering where, exactly, there are better rappers than **Ghostface**, **Nas**, and **Jay-Z** (he still counts as long as his guest appearances are better than cats' whole albums), I kind of have to agree. There's no real vibe here anymore, which sucks, but that brings us to **Saigon**. While his long-awaited debut album, *The Greatest Story Never Told*, still hasn't arrived, the Brownsville-bred ex-con-turned-*Entourage* cast member has been killing with tracks like "The Letter P" (with **Kool G. Rap**) and the remix of **Nas**' "War." Embracing the quasi-messianic role of New York savior, the "Yardfather" begins his latest mixtape *Welcome To Saigon* (from **DJ Drama's** *Gangsta Grillz* series; (www.gangstagrillz.com) with a pep talk of sorts to New York City before proceeding to raise the bar even higher for his LP. Far from unfocused freestyles, conceptual tracks like "Contraband, Part 2" and "Shot in the Booty" have the quality of album cuts.

**Clinton Sparks** hasn't impressed me in the past but his and **Kanye West's** *Touch the Sky* (www.mixunit.com) is one of the better mixtapes to come through the pipeline recently. Everyone is on here, from **N.O.R.E.** and **Freeway** to up-and-comers like Bmore's **Bossman** and Boston's **LT**—as well as the first post-beef Jay-Z/Nas collaboration, "Twin Towers." While Sparks himself is responsible for nearly all the beats and the assembly, Kanye spends his time on the mic, amusingly gloating about his recent *Oprah* appearance. Speaking of Jay-Z and Kanye, **Lupe Fiasco**, who both can claim as a protégé, has been hitting the mixtape circuit hard recently with eye-opening results. In a novel twist, the third installment of his *Fahrenheit 1/15* series finds him freestyling over beats from **Gorillaz's** *Demon Days* LP.

Ever since **Coo Coo Cal** put Milwaukee on blast in his "My Projects" video, I've amused myself by wondering what previously unrepped cities are going to add themselves to the hip-hop map. What's poppin' in Worcester? When's Tulsa gonna blow? On his *The Voice of Northeast Portland* (Jusfamily), **Cool Nutz** reps Portland, Oregon—and the whole Northwest—hard. There's nothing distinctive to speak of, though; his flow and beat selection are so generic, he could be from anywhere. While his name is ill, Mr. Nutz sounds desperate, begging 50 Cent to put him and his crew on.

Are graffiti and hip-hop getting remarried? Probably not, but two graf-related records recently hit my desk. Cali's **Ex Vandalz** take their name from the early Brooklyn graf crew the Ex Vandals and, using the obligatory *Wild Style* loop, pay homage to getting up on "American Graffiti" from their *Industry Standard* EP (Vandal Squad). The OGs of nostalgic graf rap, **El Da Sensei** and **Tame One**, sounded great as **The Artifacts** but neither of the Brick City Kids have proved to be exciting solo artists. Backed with solid beats from producers **Illmind** and **Frequency**, however, El hits on both sides of his "Crowd Pleasa" b/w "Natural Feel Good" 12-inch (Fat Beats). A nice, albeit potentially temporary, return to form.



**HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWER:**  
**MIKE RELM**

He's still without an album of his own, but that doesn't make hybrid performer Mike Relm any less respectable. His live sets—hi-octane mixes of everything from hip-hop mashed into '80s retro—are augmented with filmstrips and videos that he manipulates simultaneously, creating more than just a simple musical journey. Relm has his hands all over the place, with a solo debut in the works, collaborations with The Gift of Gab and DJ Vadim, and scratches on Mr. Lif's forthcoming LP. He's also recording the music and sound-design segments for the kids book-turned-animated series *Turntable Timmy*, and is currently hard at work with Bay Area author Adisa Banjoko (*Lyrical Swords Vol 1: Hip-Hop and Politics in the Mix*) on the documentary *64 Squares in the Cipher*, a film examining hip-hop's strange relation to chess. Here's what Relm is rockin' lately. *Ken Taylor*  
 www.mikerelm.com

**RHYMEFEST**  
**DYNAMITE (GOING POSTAL)**

J Records/US/12  
 I was hooked from the first horns; then the cymbals come crashing in like a Mack truck. This song is just epic, lyrically and musically. I would suggest listening to it loud as hell right before you tell your boss to stick his TPS reports up his ass. "If King were alive this is how he would sound: 'You a soft-ass nigga, you a mark, you a gump/Fuckin' lame, you a coward/You a punk, you a chuuumpp!'" Agreed. *Mike Relm*

**BABY DAYLINER**  
**WHODUNIT**

Brassland/US/12  
 Baby Dayliner's got that classic delivery that is going to carry this song to the top of a lot of best-of-2006 lists. "Whodunit" has all the ingredients for a dancefloor staple. The disco-soul-inspired rhythm drives the song, and Dayliner's just got that way of making you want to sing along with him—at the top of your lungs. I'm not leaving home without this song. *Mike Relm*

**PIGEON JOHN**  
**BRAND NEW DAY**

Quannum/US/12  
 There are a handful of songs that you can drop at a party—or at home with your friends or in your car—that will turn a bad situation good and a good situation great. This is one of those songs. It starts out with drums set at a tempo normally reserved for indie rock bands, which only intensifies the energy that John brings. Then the guitar riff kicks in and you're officially uplifted. Pigeon John's going to find himself making a lot of new and excited fans with this track. *Mike Relm*

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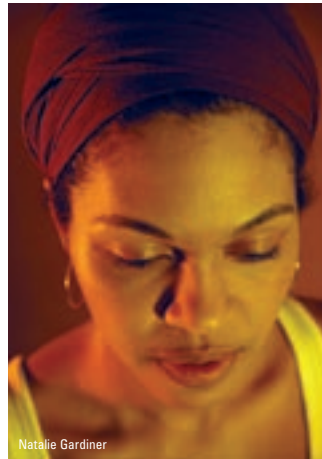
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## BROKEN BUSINESS BY PETER NICHOLSON FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Natalie Gardiner



Teddy Rok



Timo Lassy

Just as the sun is beginning to shatter those gray clouds, 2006 is warming up to be a hot one for the nu-jazz scene. Even in the still-cold climes of Northern Europe, signs of life are poking up through the snow. Ricky-Tick Records is their name, and dance jazz from Finland is their game. With mixing by **Tuomas Kallio** of **Nu Spirit Helsinki**, two new 12" are in heavy rotation at my house—**Dalindéo**'s "Voodoo" and **Timo Lassy**'s "African Rumble." The Dalindéo has a particularly sharp pairing of flute and trumpet, while Lassy's sax is big and bold over some hot kit work from producer **Teddy Rok**.

Also getting down with the live band up north is **Gerd**'s always-hot 4Lux label. **Andrew Tytherleigh** did some work in the '90s for Paper/Repap Records; now he's got a band together as **Hubtone**. His *Squelch* EP is a scorcher—especially the funky freakouts on the b, courtesy of **Amplified Orchestra**, who do it once inna space-disco style and again on a fat, breakbeat-driven dub. Wait for the break, which features enough cowbell to keep even Christopher Walken happy.

He may be at a similar latitude, but Sweden's **Ramjac** is up to something completely different on the sixth release for his eponymous label. Almost pulled the CD-R out of the deck to see if there was dust on the needle (bit muddled, I am!) when I first heard the scritch-scratchy beat to "Arise," but as soon as **Natalie Gardiner**'s dark, molasses-sweet singing started, I knew everything was okay. A superbly soulful bit of broken downtempo, "Arise" is just the kind of track you might hear early on in the night at a **Fresco** joint.

Fresh, what? Fresco are San Francisco's finest purveyors of funky soul music, from hip-hop to broken beat. Last month they had Kenny Dope in town; the month before it was Jazzanova, and they've just dropped their first vinyl—it's a storming version of **Ray Baretto**'s "Future Paradise" (love the drums!) by **Yosaku** b/w a Stevie Wonder-inspired hip-hop number from **Green Tea**. So what else is in **Hakobo**'s crates? "People are really feeling the punk/funk/jazz stylings of **Soil & Pimp** as well as the supa-jazzy broken techno madness of **Linkwood**'s "What's Up With the Underground." I don't know who the hell Linkwood is, but that joint is killing me and every time I play it, people bug out trying to dance to it!

A huge tune that will have everybody dancing—although the long-ass name might tie up the tongue—is **Faze Action** presents **Orto** featuring **Vanessa Freeman**'s "Waiting Is Over." FA calls in Canada's 83 West outfit for house remixes on the b, but it's the broken original version that's tops—Freeman's unfettered voice soars high over stellar strings and a big, fat beat.

Gotta close things out, but not before calling your attention to the latest **Afro-Mystik** single from Om Records boss man **Chris Smith** and company. Smith's label may get more attention than he, but ever since his early-adopter mix CD *Future Tropic* (which was one of the first US mixes to feature people like Azymuth, Stephane Attias, and Kaidi Taitham back in 2000), Smith has been dropping some serious future-jazz action. "Miracles" is the new track with his Afro-Mystik band and it's a tight samba-house joint with great singing from **Omega**.

That's all the page I've got, but keep it locked for next month, when we head east to New York and west to Japan.



## REGGAE REWIND BY ROSS HOGG THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON DANCEHALL, DUB, ROOTS, AND LOVERS ROCK



Tanya Stephens



Vybz Kartel



Buju Banton

Several old riddims get reheated and reworked, two big tunes with the same name get nothin' but forwards, and one of the genre's biggest stars tries his hand a *foreign*—all this and more in this edition of Reggae Rewind.

Badman a Bad Boy? *Fi true!* **Elephant Man** has signed to **Diddy's** label. His album, *Ova Di Wall*, was slated for a late-2005 release, but got pushed back while the deal with Bad Boy was being inked. It will be interesting to see if Ele sticks to the dance tunes that have brought him recent popularity or if he resurrects the hardcore thug lyrics that made him famous in the first place. Crosssava di wall? We'll see.

Super producer **Dave Kelly** is back with what has to be the biggest riddim in months: the Eighty Five. Not only does he showcase young stars like **Assassin** and **Spice**, he also voices veterans like **Pinchers** and **Yellowman**. Compared to many producers in the genre, Kelly is far from prolific, but every riddim he produces busts big—and they all feature the star of the Mad House camp, **Baby Cham**. Cham's "Ghetto Story" owns this riddim. The tune is so big, in fact, that **Beenie Man** recorded an answer of sorts, borrowing the vocal melody for his "We Set The Trend" on the Nookie Nookie Riddim (John John), a pulsating piano-accented version that also features a standout tune from rising star **Aidonia**.

There are two big tunes *out a road* that share the same title: "Badman Forward, Badman Pull Up." While Elephant Man's song, over the Global Riddim (Fire Links), blurs the lines between dancehall and soca, the version by **Ding Dong** (VP) finds him chatting in a rock-stone voice over a pounding beat that sounds straight out of 1990.

Speaking of the early '90s, the throwback wave

continues with a new version of the Man Fi Dead Riddim. It features a return to earlier form by **Buju Banton**, who absolutely crushes all competition with his "Hey Bwoy Hey Bwoy." And he doesn't stop there. He blesses not one but two songs on the resurrected Mudd Up Riddim (Greensleeves), "Guns Dem a Buss" and "Good Good Ah Pressure Dem."

In the category of new riddims that are actually new, dancehall's reigning clown princes **Leftside & Esco** continue the comedy routine with their new Galore Riddim (Legends). Leftside's Austin Powers-inspired alter ego **Dr. Evil** stutters his way through the wicked (and wickedly funny) "More Punanny," and on the Jump Off Riddim, newlywed **Vybz Kartel** stammers over the frenzied 127-BPM riddim produced by **Preston Onfroy**.

Not to be outdone, superstar producer **Don Corleon**—who enjoyed incredible success with recent one-drop riddims like Drop Leaf and Seasons—is back with a mid-tempo bashment riddim called The Sweat. Corleon strikes a balance between the supersonic new riddims and the early '90s resurgence, and he voices top-notch singers and deejays like **Busy Signal**, **Beenie Man**, and **Capleton**.

And finally, **Tanya Stephens** is set to release another album, *These Streets*. The title track is a cry for rude boys to give their women the same attention they give to street life, asking her man to keep his lips on her like his marijuana and to stay on her like the corner, because "these streets don't love you like I do."



**Various Artists / Sampler 66**  
The *Av* empire continues to grow with its 12-inch picture disc Quality Electronic Music spotlighting eight new signings to the UK label, all of whom indicate 2006 should prove a spectacular year for *Av* devotees.  
6th March 2006 / *Av* Records / Distributed by SRD (UK)  
www.avrecords.com

**Miller & Fiam / Modern Romance**  
The debut album by Australians Miller and Holmen (Fiam). Possibly the most organic sounding album on Expanding to date, *Modern Romance* explores Dave Miller's talent for exposing elegant mathematical formulas within tracks with Fiam's fondness for subtle melodies. Simple, personal and delicately executed.  
27th March 2006 / Expanding Records / Distributed by Cargo (UK)  
www.expandingrecords.com

**Fisk Industries / 77 and Rising**  
Fisk Industries' second release is a lovingly crafted 12" mini-album, limited to 500 hand-numbered copies. Industrial sized brass, dark rhythms, beats and textures sewed into a sprawling fabric, focussing on the build up of small elements, sounds and musical phrases. Dense soundscapes to submerge yourself within.  
24th April 2006 / Highpoint Lawrie Records / Distributed by Cargo (UK)  
www.highpointrecords.com

**Posthuman / The Peoples Republic**  
After 3 years away, this is a massive departure from the cousins Posthuman's previous outings, being melancholic guitars and menacing synthesis with ethereal vocals and industrial electro. Falling into that undefinable place between electronic and post-rock genres, this is a very dark and striking album indeed.  
31st April 2006 / Seed Records / Distributed by SRD (UK)  
www.seedrecords.com

**Various Artists / SRL Sampler**  
Limited edition debut release from new label, SRL, spawned from the graphic design company Saburb. A showcase of eclectic hybrid hip hop, afro-jazz ambient and classic electronics, by artists who have previously worked with labels such as Al, Lee, Merch, Expanding and Warp.  
6th March 2006 / Saburb, The Record Label / Distributed by Cargo (UK)  
www.saburbthebrandlabel.co.uk

**Line / A Snowstorm in a Globe**  
A dark slice of vocal electro shot through with paranoid murmurings, synth static and waves of bass, while the b-side "Observe The Mechanics" is an edgy heavy distorted electro-house tune about the merits of performance. This 12" is a taster for the forthcoming full-length "Tech Nite" later this year.  
27th March 2006 / Uncharted Audio / Distributed by Cargo (UK)  
www.unchartedaudio.co.uk

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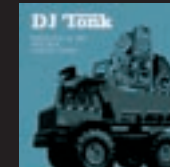
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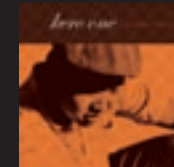


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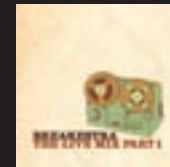
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I think when the NYC blackout happened two summers ago, some energy was temporarily dispersed in pretty devious ways, falling through time and space to end up in the spring of '06. Bass-heavy music across the grid seems to have been hit with a serious shock of old-school electro... or maybe *XL888* just sent me records that were supposed to go to Philip Sherburne.

Either way, the biggest news is that **Professor X** (N.W.A. member and producer of JJ Fad's "Supersonic") has released his first tracks under that name in 16 years. Dutch label Clone has 'em and pairs them up with a re-release of the classic track "Professor X (saga)." **Andrea Parker** meanwhile has done some electric divination and conjured up the unbelievable debut from **SoulWeaver** on her Touchin' Bass label. Also feeling the classic electro zap is labelmate **Egg Foo Young**, who has just finished a remix of **Gundup**'s "Spice" in his trademark new/old style for release on Dirty Whiteboy Records. (Psst, this is the same guy who created the *Metal on Metal* mix for Turntable Lab that no one should miss!)

Across the pond, the Germans are on the move, too. Hamburg has produced some pretty hard crunch from **The Strike Boys** with their hot track "Hot" and an even hotter remix on the MOTU label. And just in case anyone thinks Germans are too serious, **Jan Driver** has created the brain-warping ghetto-tech human/animal hybrid that is **Huggy & Dayton** (remixes available on Grand Petrol). It's sure to get noticed on both sides of the Atlantic for its saucy lyrics and tweaked shuffle.

If you think Germans are having all the fun, look to France where electro-punkers **Ddamage** are shocking your ass like a faulty vibrator with a remix of New York thump king **Crunc Tesla**. And Americans **Dev79** and **Starkey** are sifting through a mess of vocals from various grime MCs to link with their Snapper and Mosquito riddims, as heard on their *Slit Jockey Vol. 1* mixtape. So far, Seattle's **DJ Collage** has been confirmed for the Mosquito riddim.

Circuits get totally freaked out when Brazil enters the equation. First, we've got the debut release on Mad Decent, **Diplo**'s new label with **Chris** from **Lemon Red**. It's the group **Bonde Do Role**, who gleefully stomp all over every fun guitar riff they can get their hands on in a *baile* style. Given the run of great remixes from **Hollertronix** on Money Studios recently, Mad Decent's future looks mighty bright. Again the Germans say *nicht so schnell*; Berlin's Man Recordings has kept up with Brazil's **Edu K** for their sixth release, which features **Deize Tigrona**'s "Sex-o-Matic" and more remixes than you can shake a stick at, including a solid one by, er, **Solid Groove**. And if all this weren't enough, **Disco D** is getting into the game, producing native Brazilian hip-hoppers **Braza**, who come with lyrical fire that's part *baile* funk, part hip-hop, and all Disco D.

On a final note, swinging back to Germany by way of Japan (and through Brazil), **Robert Koch** (of **The Tape** and **Jahcoozi**) has done a remix of **Tigarah**, Japan's biggest *baile* funk enthusiast (try that on for size at [www.tigarah.net](http://www.tigarah.net))—it's a classic right out of the box. It should see a release on **Shir Khan**'s Tolcha label, hopefully in time to coincide with a remix EP of new material from The Tape and a new EP from **Jahcoozi**.



**BASS GUEST REVIEWER:  
DJ MAXXIMUS**

As Din-ST and Fever, Frederic Stader rocked the house for labels like Tigerbeat6 and Digital Hardcore, killing NWA's "100 Miles and Runnin'" for the former and leaving blood-splattered beats all over breakcore for the latter. Now, as DJ Maximus, the Berliner takes it out on grime, dubstep, and all things dirty with his latest mixtape, *Bass the World*, part party mix, part promo disc for his A&R work for the Swiss label MG 77. It features killer tracks from Ed DMX (in his grimmer incarnation), Ghostfader, and Maximus himself with his new protégé Soom-T, a female MC whom Maximus claims will wipe M.I.A. from all the Pazz and Jop critics' memories. Keep your ears peeled for more from the label in the coming months; everything from the "Dem All Shot" single by Phokus (feat. Tinchy Stryder and Dirty Danger) to a select-city US tour. *Ken Taylor*  
[www.djmaximus.com](http://www.djmaximus.com), [www.basstheworld.blogspot.com](http://www.basstheworld.blogspot.com)

**SKREAM  
SKREAMIZM VOL. 1**

Tempa/UK/12  
This boy is on fire, and with Tempa behind him, get ready for the *Skreamizm* series; lots warm low-end but with the coldest heights. "Rottan" is like the wacked-out cartoon *Monkey Dust*, but for your ears. The bass here just never dies. *DJ Maximus*

**DIZZEE RASCAL  
WASTEMAN**

Dirtee Stank/UK/12  
On the Rascal's third LP, we can expect a maximum of ladylove. His taster, "Wasteman" (produced by Footsie of Newham Generals), is a big tune. It's Dizzee himself who takes the track to big heights, showing why he is the number one MC around. *DJ Maximus*

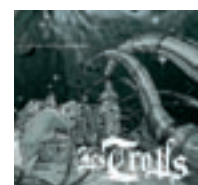
**AEOX  
NULL #12**

Null/GER/12  
AeoX always steps into strange territory with sounds never heard before; this one is like Frank Zappa with a gay twist. They tore the roof off of Panorama Bar in Berlin (and my mind!) with their live PA. Hanno Hinkelbein and his guitar-swinging monster mate Alexej are worth checking out if you're bored with minimal techno from Germany—and you like punk. I sure do! *DJ Maximus*



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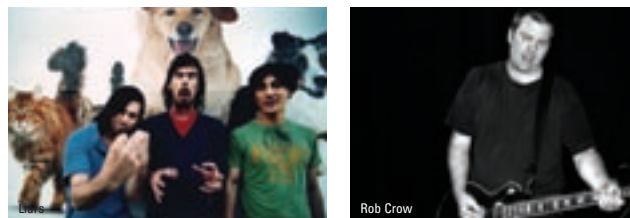
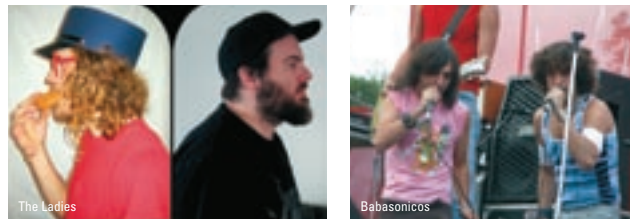
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**AFTER SILENCE**  
BY MARTIN DE LEON II  
THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Harvard dance music is out. This month, aesthetic anarchism is white-hot. With pop blurring borders and rockism still alive and well, the fuzzy channel of nerd music is getting less clear. Beards, bling, and gay porn album covers; it's true—the clouds outside really are cartoons.

**Liams'** new *It Fit When I Was a Kid* EP (Mute) is the best thing I've heard all year. Four tracks schooled in Throbbing Gristle Studies punish flat ideas of melody ("Bingo! Count Draculuck") and uptight indie-rock structuralism (the title track). With the eerie guitars of "The Frozen Glacier of Mastodon Blood" and the faux gay porn cover art glued to my hands, I want to cut up old issues of *Spin*, make a diorama of Berlin, and go visit these guys.

Running with scissors are the **Lucky Dragons**, who slice traditional north Mexican folk music, the stuff I grew up listening to, and make it sound like **Kid 606** back in the day. *Norteñas* (States Rights) makes thrift-store Spanish records sound like software sneezing. "La Desdeñosa" is a Nintendo soundtrack over a **Los Alegres de Teranesque** group, making this a monumental record of *glitch en español*.

Beats sound like they're speaking French when **The Eternals** make them. The Chicago trio's *High Anxiety* EP (Aesthetics) is terrific, with remixes by **A Grape Note**, **Prefuse 73**, and **Exercise Tiger**. Think: Don Letts and Stereolab elbowing each other ("By This Time Today") or Tortoise at their best ("Right to Revenge").

Tight jeans and white sunglasses are the future for Argentina's **Babasonicos**. On their eighth album for the disco-rock sextet, *Anoche* (Universal), they whip out the Spanish-language dictionaries for the monolingual with their trashy Brit pop ("Asi Se Habla") and almost-perfect love ditties ("Puesto").

Wobbly turntables are **DJ Jester the Filipino Fist's** way of forgetting heartbreak. The San Antonio native's latest mix album, *Secret Love* (Exponential), is somehow better than his last. Jester (a.k.a. Mikey Pendon) is a walking music biographer and whether it's cheesy Foreigner, nostalgic Pavement, Tone Loc, or the dustiest Miami bass record, it's all here. '80s beats bounce off your eyelids as you realize that he's one of the few DJs who wears his heart on his record sleeve.

Women make some noise as **The Ladies** (actually two dudes: **Rob Crow** of **Pinback** and **Zach Hill** of **Hella**) go transgender for their tomorrow-pop collaboration *They Mean Us* (Temporary Residence). Prickly guitars and stuttering drums ("Vacation, Asphyxia, Vacation") and itty-bitty Deerhoof sound-alikes ("Recycler 2") make me wanna break something with joy.

Estonian indie rock also makes me giddy. **Pia Fraus'** new EP, *Chromatic Nights* (Kohvir), is like fuzzy, Stereolab-informed crunk. With remixes by Scotsman **Bill Wells** and a nifty remix that's all *National Geographic* by Japanese producer **Mondii**, I want to Google beaches for hours.

Hipster-mullet-wearing Mexican internet label Poni Republic ([www.ponirepublic.com](http://www.ponirepublic.com)) is also worth keeping an eye on, as their releases from **Yamamoto**, **Nuuro**, and **Gloom** are chock full of bookish electronics. They've opened up for Xiu Xiu and are part of Mexico City's new and weirdo laptop scene.



**FAST FORWARD**  
BY JASON  
"METHOD ONE" LEDER  
EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF DRUM & BASS



Drum & bass was built on a foundation of innovation and boundary pushing, but now it seems it's easier—from a financial standpoint at least—for labels to fall back on releasing less adventurous material. This is due in part to record distributors, who have long seemed unwilling to stray beyond the labels and styles that are proven sellers. For smaller, under-the-radar imprints, the distribution situation often acts as a barrier separating the music from potential fans.

Instead of complaining about the state of drum & bass, **Covert Operations** label head **James Clements** (a.k.a. **ASC**) set out to prove the distributors wrong. He moved his label toward subscription-based direct distribution, with each "subscriber" paying in advance for a four-record pack. This hands-on approach bypasses the "tastemakers" altogether and gives each Covert release a readily recognizable character, a spot-on fusion of solid dancefloor elements and the melodic sensibilities of early Good Looking and 720 Degrees releases. (Full disclosure: one of my tracks is available in the Covert Ops Series #4 pack at [www.cov-ops.co.uk](http://www.cov-ops.co.uk).)

Moving on to the new releases that have caught my ear: **Gridlok's** Project 51 imprint continues its winning streak with a new release by **The Outfit**. While most people will love the twisted funk of "Stick Together," it's the b-side, "Ghobi Ghost," that really kills it—the eerie feel and nitro-propelled bassline are sure to destroy almost any soundsystem. Speaking of killing soundsystems, **Blame's** "Take Me Away" (720 Degrees) is such a massive party tune that you might even need to give it a rewind while listening at home. Check the flip, "Livewire," for a more bouncy, house-flavored rendition of the signature Blame sound.

Heading into darker territory, **Skynet** drops "Reincarnate/G Iory Boyz" on his eponymous Skynet Recordings, complete with clever *Terminator 3* samples and bent basslines that turn your head inside out. The ageless **Q Project** gets remixed on the latest release in the CIA Limited series—**Total Science** makes "Greatest Thing" into a wobbly workout that fits nicely with the rich, summertime intro; "Bang Out VIP" is more of a direct roller, with a nicely executed house organ-stab bassline. Simple but good.

Continuing to **Big Bud's** Soundtrax label, fans of the recent *Soundtrax4Life* mix CD will be happy that the **The Green Man's** eerie "Chainsmoker" is about to reach shops as a vinyl single. On the more chilled-out tip, the **Bachelors of Science** (who have recently signed tracks to Hospital and Soundtrax spin-off label Super8Sound) team up with **Stunna** for the sublime "Rhodes Ahead" on **Nookie's** Phuzion imprint. Combined with the flipside, "11201" by Czech artist **Brooklyn**, this is a must-have for anyone who misses the glory days of Good Looking. Finally, the **Cartel** boys are set to release *The Product* EP, where LA's **Infiltrata** joins usual suspects **Craze** and **Juju**. With influences ranging from hip-hop to dub to movie soundtracks, this four-tracker is pure quality all the way through, and is sure to get massive play in the months ahead.

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**XLR8R** ALARM RINGTONE



**LUCKY 13**  
BY TOPH ONE

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at [www.fabric8.com/redwine](http://www.fabric8.com/redwine). Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



Kudu



Manhunter from Ghostly's *Idol Tryouts Two* (photo by Shawn Brackbill)



Denizen Kane

In a moment of either severe alcoholic irresponsibility or supreme drunken brilliance, I have now pretty much given up on headphones completely. This is due largely to my tendency to lose the damn things nearly every night I play out, but regardless, I feel majestic in my newfound simplicity. What might be the next extraneous item to be thrown to the pigeons outside of Dalva? Ballpoint pens? Pants? Vocalization? I may as well just show up to gigs in my boxers, play a Metallica album, and fall asleep on a barstool like the ultimate zen wino. Fuck off—my life is my art.

**1) J DILLA**

(RIP/US/producer) Hugely influential yet criminally underappreciated, Jay Dee was behind the boards on classic material from A Tribe Called Quest, Common, Slum Village, and many, many more. As Kalil from Fresh Air said onstage in SF the weekend he passed, "We lost our Charlie Parker." Word, and respect.

**2) CRAZY GIRL "GET PICKED UP"**

(Tummy Touch/UK/12) All I gotta say is watch out for Tiffany McGinnis and her forthcoming album, *Southern Belle from Hell*. Loud, raunchy electro-rock hot-rod music made by a true queen of the night. Not for the squeamish—but fun as hell with the windows down at 110 miles per.

**3) VIN SOL LOVEBOAT**

(promo/US/CD) My man VinSol is a Lil Bastard. That is to say, we have a drinking gang and a monthly party called Lil Bastards, where we get wasted and play fucked-up mixes like OutKast vs. New Order and Beatnuts vs. The Cure and it works like a motherfucker and people go nuts and then we wake up the next day and try to put our records back in the proper sleeves and figure out just exactly what happened last night. Props to Similak Chyld and the Oakland Faders for killer mix CDs out right now as well.

**4) ENGINEERS "HOME (JAGZ KOONER FUNHOUSE REMIX)"**

(promo/US/12) Hauntingly alluring dance rock that sounds like something Nobody would produce for a long spring drive. Maybe I need a new category down at Open Mind Music—the "Highway 1" section for sun-bleached happy music.

**5) PROZACK TURNER BANGATHON**

(Hunger Strike/US/CD) Prozack knows the ups and downs of the music biz as well as almost anyone, and it's a rare pleasure to listen to familiar tales from such a capable and entertaining voice as his. And backed by top-notch production from OhNo, Paul Nice, and friends, this is a sure-shot. Cocktails, my man.

**6) SKULL SNAPS "SNAPPED"**

(Ten12/US/12) Not only did the pimps at Ten12 Records score the rights to re-release the Skull Snaps' entire catalogue; they got the band to reform for a one-night reunion gig last December *and* they produced this wicked re-edit. Damn.

**7) IDOL TRYOUTS TWO**

(Ghostly International/US/2CD) One could easily lose a few lazy Sunday hours with this fine, quirky compilation rotating through a CD changer, but I'll need the vinyl for Matthew Dear's "Send You Back," Charles Manier's "Bang Bang Lover," and Manhunter's "North Pole." Open up that Highway 1 crate!

**8) ROB SYMEONN "COLD OUTSIDE"**

(Redbud/US/7) Regardless of the wintertime title, this is a hot little gem from Brooklyn's reggae vet to warm those chilly spring afternoons. Just lovely.

**9) JACKSON "RADIO CACA"**

(Sound of Barclay/FRA/12) \$20 says this joint is going to be as seminal as "Bug in the Bassbin" or "Strings of Life" in 10 or 20 years. (Ever try collecting money from a wino?)

**10) KUDU DEATH OF THE PARTY**

(Nublu/US/CD) Imagine Siouxsie Sioux wailing over dirty electro beats in a smoky cabaret in an outtake from *Blade Runner*. I've been babbling like an idiot about these guys for years, and I'm more in love than ever. The future sound of now.

**11) DENIZEN KANE TREE CITY LEGENDS VOL. II**

(Galapagos4/US/CD) A veteran of the Def Poetry Jam and Chicago's Typical Cats crew, Denizen comes with the credentials to boast, and shine he does on this sophomore solo joint. "Killa Killa" (production by one-to-watch Maker), "Years Peelback," and "Another Life" shine brightly.

**12) TANYA MORGAN MOONLIGHTING**

(Loud Minority/US/CD) What if The Roots went to Navy Pier and checked out girls all day and ate candy apples and popcorn? And listened to a big boombox with De La Soul and Slick Rick? Check this crew (not a chick) and dig it.

**LUCKY 13) FUZZ ONE A BRONX CHILDHOOD**

(Testify Books/US/book) If it weren't backed up by photos, it may well be unbelievable. This dude pioneered the life many of us take for granted without ever getting the attention many of his cohorts hogged. As a 10-year-old graf artist, bombing NYC subways in 1971, there are few who come close to this maverick. Massive respect.

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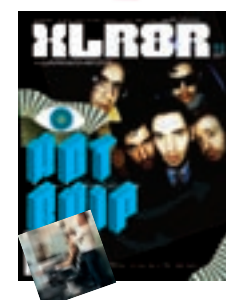
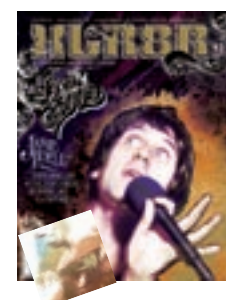
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XLR8R incite



Anticon's drum maestro lets it rip from deep inside his wardrobe.

WORDS: KEN TAYLOR

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER WOODCOCK

When you take a peek into Jel's Oakland, CA studio, you come to realize that it *really* doesn't take that much space to create some of the most textured, spatial, and exquisite instrumental hip-hop records of the last couple years. With albums like *10 Seconds* (a reference to the extended sample time he achieved by speeding up records) and his latest, *Soft Money* (Anticon), he's becoming increasingly known for his drum sounds, whether they be lifted or programmed, but never played live. In high school, when the drum position had been filled by a brown-nosing jock, Jel (a.k.a. Jeffrey Logan) took up the coronet; with that (and the early purchase of the E-Mu SP1200 drum machine), he never looked back—at least not in the direction of a Pearl or Tama kit.

That SP1200, still the cornerstone of Jel's arsenal, is now tucked away in a closet, one that serves as the play space for creating euphoric, pounding, hazy, and all-around engaging opuses like *Soft Money*. In the midst of mixing the new *Subtle* record, Jel gives *XLR8R* a quick tour of his killer coat rack.

[www.anticon.com](http://www.anticon.com)

#### WHAT'S THE BASIC SETUP OF YOUR STUDIO?

Well, first of all, it's a closet (laughs). We found a nice place for cheap, and it's a big enough closet that I can fit all my shit in there and close it up. I just open the door and sit in the hallway and work. It's pretty much my setup live: I have a laptop with Pro Tools [9.2.3], an M-Box, my MPC [2000 XL], my SP1200, my [Boss SP-303] Dr. Sample, a little delay pedal, a [Roland] VS880, and an Alesis Ion keyboard, which has glitches. Since I bought it I haven't really used it for recording—it's just sitting there waiting for me to fix it.

#### DOES BROKEN GEAR TAKE ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN THAT EXCITES YOU, OR ARE YOU QUICK TO JUST THROW IT BACK ONTO THE SHELF?

With the instruments I use, drum machines will just glitch on you and freeze. There's nothing really spectacular about it. If it was something that had some old radio tuner or four-track or something unique on it, then maybe...

#### HOW MUCH DO YOU PROCESS YOUR DRUM SOUNDS AND OTHER SOURCES?

It depends on the feel of it; if I like how it sounds. I don't really mind if the sound's overused because I'm gonna chop it up and reprogram it anyway. When I chop up breaks, I just sit down with my record player and my MPC and I'll just sample part for part; I'll just find a break and take each individual hit and then just start playing with it live.

#### ARE YOU AGAINST USING SAMPLING SOFTWARE ON A COMPUTER?

I'm not "anti" anything really. I just make do with what I have. I've heard dope shit that kids have done on Fruity Loops, so I'm open to anything; it's just usually what I'm comfortable with....

#### THERE'S A STRONG ATMOSPHERIC ROCK SENSIBILITY TO *SOFT MONEY*. WHERE DOES THAT COME FROM?

I think what you're hearing is a lot of what Odd Nosdam added. He actually helped me mix the majority of the album, and added a bunch of ambient and drone kinda stuff. I can see My Bloody Valentine definitely being an influence on him.

#### WHAT DID THE RECORD SOUND LIKE BEFORE YOU GAVE IT TO HIM TO PLAY WITH?

It was pretty much the same elements. When we sat down to mix it, we were thinking about having songs coming together properly and beginnings and ends of songs being cleaned up. Because a lot of my songs were just kinda... the meat was there but shit would change drastically just from us playing around with stuff.

#### THEN YOU BUILT IN THE TRANSITIONS?

Yeah, we were sitting on different sequences of the album for a while, flipping them around a lot.

#### WITH ALL THE COLLABORATION THAT YOU AND THE OTHER ANTICON GUYS DO, WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE FOR MAINTAINING ZEN IN THE STUDIO?

I don't think there's been any collaboration (except a couple) where we've been in the studio with the musicians. [Those collaborations] have been by mail, [online], and shit 'cause a lot of it is with people overseas. With Anticon, we're at each other's houses. But the one thing that we all have noticed that amazes us about meeting up with people and working with them is that it's a kindred spirit thing. Like we meet people and become friends.... And if we hit it off as friends, then it's usually like "Fuck it. Let's do some music."



Inside Jel's studio. (top) Alesis Ion, (left to right) E-Mu SP1200, Roland VS880, Pro Tools screen, Akai MPC 2000, and Boss SP-303



## ARTIST TIPS: COBBLESTONE JAZZ



There are more than a few sides to Vancouver musician **Mathew Jonson**—the techno producer, the minimal-yet-banging DJ, and the Wagon Repair Records' head are just the tip of iceberg. His most interesting incarnation of late, though, is Cobblestone Jazz, a group comprised of himself and friends Daniel Tate and Tyger Dhula.

With only three EPs to their name thus far, the trio definitely prefers the thrill of live improvisation over fiddling in the studio. But when they do put their invigorating sounds to disc, expect big things: crazy-deep bass, warm inflections of Chicago house, icy-slick drum programming, and, naturally, a touch of jazz. Their latest EP, *Cobblestone Jazz* (Wagon Repair), hardly sounds like the Reagan era, but Jonson jokes that the five essential pieces of gear that made it possible were "copied directly from *XLBR*'s December 1985 issue."

[www.wagonrepair.ca](http://www.wagonrepair.ca)

**1. ROLAND SH-101** "This synthesizer is used in almost every song we have ever done. It's primarily used for bass sounds but is also great for lead parts. Originally released as a stand-up synth with mod handgrip and guitar strap, it comes complete with the character of an acoustic instrument."

**2. ROLAND JX-3P WITH PG-200 PROGRAMMER** "Just like the SH-101, the step sequencer is so easy to use from this synth. It gives new meaning to the word minimal; if you try to do anything complicated with this piece, you can't—so get used to it. Boundaries are good. The sound is even better."

**3. TAMA TECHSTAR TS 305** "For the six spaces of rack that this uses up, I still think it's worth it for the hi-hat and tom sounds. Originally made as a drum brain for the first electronic drum sets, I use it with the triggers from the 808 or 909. I try to make these sounds on the Elektron Machinedrum but it's just never the same as analog."

**4. ENSONIQ DP4+** "Out of any of the digital vocoders I've tried, this is the best for your buck. Unlike most, this vocoder follows the frequency envelope with the vowel sounds of your voice. Dan uses his with a Nord Lead 3 or the JX-3P as the carrier and it always seems to sound pretty close to the old analog Roland one he had before it got burnt in a fire at the local jazz club."

**5. ROLAND TR-808** "You still can't beat the kick drum on this thing. Aside from running all the triggers to our step sequencers, the clock flutters around so much when used as the master clock that your tracks sound like a live band. Unfortunately for the DJs, it's virtually impossible to lock any of our records [on pitch], but DJing wasn't meant to be that easy anyways, was it?"



### GOING MOBILE

**Logitech Wireless Music System**

**MSRP: \$149.99; [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)**

When snaking wires have transformed your once "cozy" apartment into the sixth level of electronic hell, it's time to make some changes. Logitech's PC-only Wireless Music System helps clean up the mess, allowing you to wirelessly stream music from your computer to any speaker system in the house. Installation is amazingly simple: one USB transmitter (into your PC) and one wireless receiver (into your stereo, with RCA and 1/8" connections)—no software necessary. The small remote gives you basic functionality (volume, track-skip, etc.), and the 330-foot range should be enough for an apartment belonging to anyone reading this magazine. *Evan Shamoon*

"IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A MILLION HALF-BAKED FEATURES PILED INTO A CHEAP PIECE OF GEAR, LOOK ELSEWHERE."



### MIDI MADE SIMPLE

**Reflex Audio Sonia Xi**

**MSRP: \$135.00; [www.reflexaudio.com](http://www.reflexaudio.com)**

If you've been eyeing MIDI knob offerings from M-Audio or Behringer, you owe it to yourself to check out this considerably smaller, arguably more useful entry into the ever-growing controller glut. Reflex Audio has been known for making excellent and inexpensive stuff (i.e. the HardSID PCI card), yet unlike Behringer, they don't need to reverse engineer anything to do it. If you're looking for a million half-baked features piled into a cheap piece of gear, look elsewhere. The **Sonia Xi**'s design is incredibly simple—12 knobs and five assignable buttons. No, it's not a one-controller solution, but at least you don't need a magnifying glass to use it. *Brandon Ivers*

"NOT ANY DRUM SURFACE WILL SATIATE THE RHYTHM MASTER WHO'S AS QUICK TO BRING DIGITAL SOUNDS TO THE STAGE AS HE IS THE STUDIO."



### DIGITAL THUMP

**Roland HPD-10 HandSonic Drum Pad**

**MSRP: \$699.00; [www.rolandus.com](http://www.rolandus.com)**

Drummers are a picky lot; they have to be, stuck behind rack toms, cymbals, and in the shadow of a flashy singer or Marshall stack. Not any drum surface will satiate the rhythm master who's as quick to bring digital sounds to the stage as he is the studio. Having been in both positions, I can attest that the **Roland HPD-10** is a versatile little bugger that hooks you with just one tap of its 10 touch-sensitive pads. The stripped-down, affordable cousin to the 15-pad HandSonic, HPD-10 packs 350 onboard sounds (tabla, conga, djembe, snares, cymbals) and built-in effects. Play it with hands, fingers, or sticks, and the Roland D Beam (a light beam that triggers sounds), adds invisible gong crashing and other padless tricks to your arsenal. Programming using this intuitive, hands-on device means creating in 3-D, not just lining up dots on a computer screen—a sonic quality your fans will surely notice. *Tomas Palermo*



### AT THE READY

**Edirol R-09 Handheld Digital Recorder**

**MSRP: \$399; [www.edirol.com](http://www.edirol.com)**

You're at a park and some crazy dude's freestyling like there's no tomorrow—you need to record it. Think your iPod and that cheap little plug-in mic are gonna get it done? Forget it. The **Edirol R-09** records in 24-bit, 48 kHz sound onto all those SD cards you've got kicking around your desk (via a built-in mic or input), compresses to MP3 if you need extra space, and spits it back to your PC via USB. You can even slap some reverb on there on the fly—just like having your old four-track stuffed in your pocket. *Rob Geary*



**DIRECT DRIVE**

**Numark HDX Hard Drive Turntable**  
MSRP: \$1899.00; [www.numark.com](http://www.numark.com)

With the world of turntables growing ever more complicated, Numark introduces its long-awaited **HDX**: the world's first and only tabletop HD/CD/MP3 player. Taking cues from its popular CDX, this tricked-out deck once again utilizes a high-torque motorized 12" platter and a real vinyl record to complete the analog metaphor. Rather than just a built-in 8x CD player, however, the HDX comes complete with an onboard 80GB hard drive and USB 2.0 ports. It supports MP3, WMA, and WAV formats, and the unit's search engine allows you to locate files by artist, album, genre, track, or BPM. Updating is managed by connecting to a Mac or PC via the built-in USB ports, and the hard drive is even removable for those who want to bring their own cache of songs to gigs. MIDI I/O, S/PDIF digital output, and integrated DSP effects are just a few of the acronyms that make this something you really, really want. *Evan Shamoon*

MIDI I/O, S/PDIF DIGITAL OUTPUT, AND INTEGRATED DSP EFFECTS ARE JUST A FEW OF THE ACRONYMS THAT MAKE THIS SOMETHING YOU REALLY, REALLY WANT.



**LAUNCH PAD**

**Korg padKontrol MIDI Controller**  
MSRP: \$299.00; [www.korg.com](http://www.korg.com)

Lifted straight from the Korg Control keyboards, the **padKontrol** is the newest entry in the stand-alone MPC-style controller war. Competing with other 16-key offerings from Akai and M-Audio, the padKontrol is probably the most attractive of the bunch. Thankfully, its good looks are coupled with an X-Y pad, two rotary encoder knobs, and a pretty decent librarian tool for assigning the pads to specific MIDI mappings. Believe it or not, the keys actually do feel quite reminiscent of an MPC. Rounding out the package is a decent collection of drum-hit sounds from Toontracks. *Brandon Ivers*



**NO HUM-DRUM**

**Elektron Machinedrum SPS1-UW Sampling Drum Machine**  
MSRP: \$1640.00; [www.elektron.se](http://www.elektron.se)

As if the original Machinedrum wasn't already lusted after enough, Elektron had to go and add a sampling engine and create the **SPS1-UW**. Most people will probably use these new features as a chance to upload their favorite drum samples to the unit, but if you dig a little deeper into the real-time sampling function, you'll uncover a whole new realm of possibilities for live use. The two audio inputs can be used for live loop recording, which can be synced to patterns on the fly—a feature that DJs would be foolish not to exploit. Expect a Turbo-MIDI interface for super-fast sample transfers in the near future. *Brandon Ivers*



**BASHING PUMPKINS**

**M-Audio Jimmy Chamberlin Signature Drums Volume 1 Loop Library**  
MSRP: \$49.95; [www.m-audio.com](http://www.m-audio.com)

I wasn't sure if I could trust Smashing Pumpkins/Zwan drummer Jimmy Chamberlin's taste enough to want to dig into his collection of 24-bit drum loops—I'm not a rocker and could care less about his previous recordings. But a drum sound is a drum sound and, surprisingly, it's easy to make more than just rock with these samples. **Jimmy Chamberlin Signature Drums Volume 1** contains drum loops and individual hits mic'd top to bottom and around the room. As each mic position is recorded separately, you're able to use the bottom mic sound of a snare, rack tom, kick, etc. Although derived from rock session drumming, you can just as easily reprogram the hits into a killer broken beat track. But, as nice as these sounds are, I still ain't buying the Pumpkins' back catalog! *Tomas Palermo*

"AS NICE AS THESE SOUNDS ARE, I STILL AIN'T BUYING THE PUMPKINS' BACK CATALOG!"

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## VIS-ED: FREEGUMS

It's all airboats and alligator doodles for South Florida's freshest upstart.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST IMAGES: ALVARO ILIZARBE



ABOVE:  
*Jerk Shit*, sketchbook  
drawing

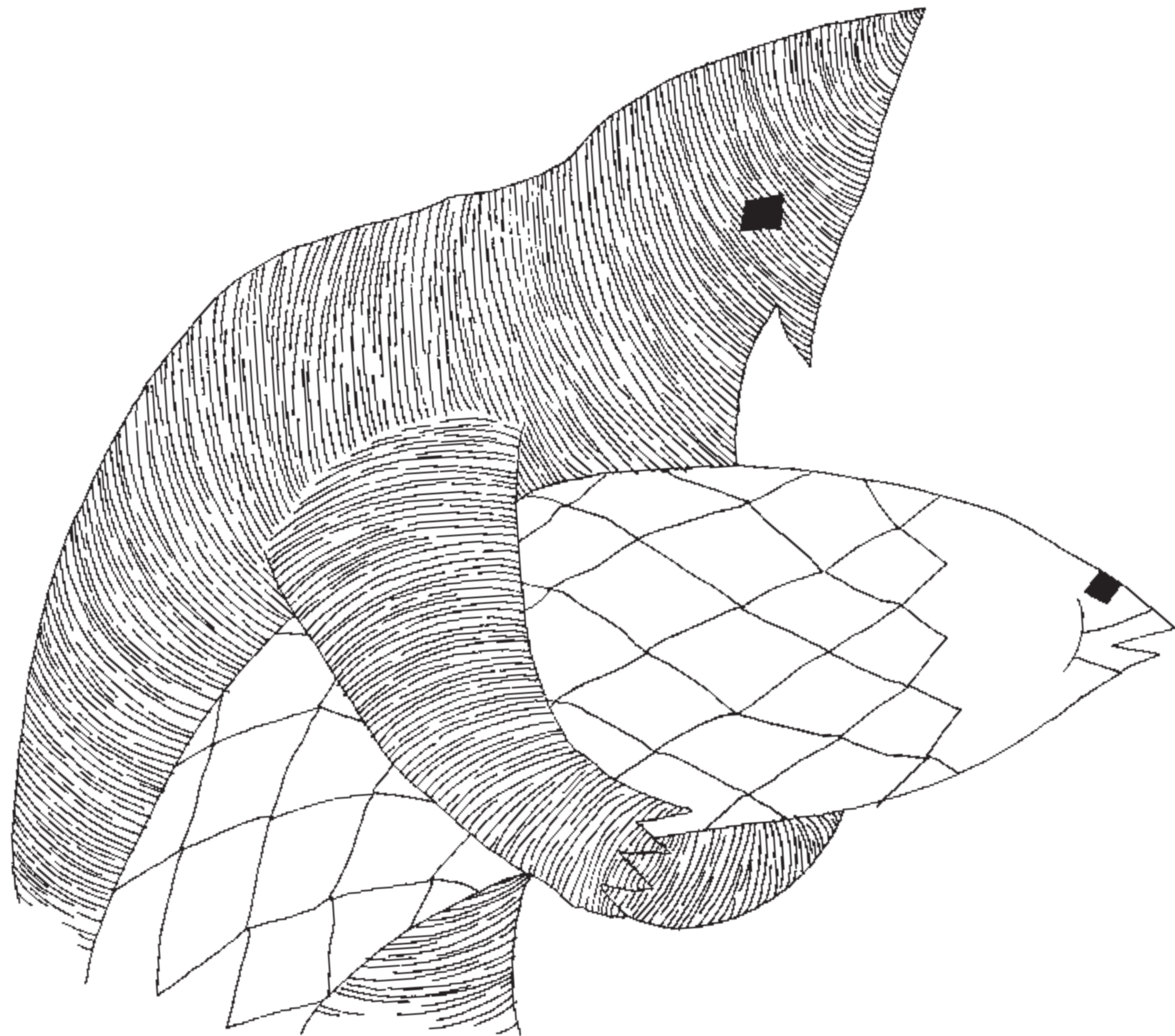
RIGHT:  
Exclusive piece for  
*XLR8R* Vis-Ed

Freegums. The name brings to mind the gummy smile of a senior citizen with his dentures out, or a dish of brightly colored Chiclets. It's actually the alias of 25-year-old Peruvian Alvaro Ilizarbe, who's been causing havoc in the streets of Miami, Florida since he was exported from Lima at the age of nine. Flexing a loose, colorful style that incorporates claws, laughing hyenas, palm trees, and clever sayings, Ilizarbe's graphic design work is a smart, tongue-in-cheek reflection of South Florida and its environs.

Ilizarbe works in the art department of ad agency Crispin Porter + Bogusky by day, but as night falls,

this Aquarian dabbles in a multitude of projects. His most visible endeavor is a line of reversible t-shirts, a smart idea that might actually justify you rocking the same garment for two weeks straight. His most recent coup—during December 2005's art expo Art Basel—found him and TypeStereo's Mike Del Marmol operating as Fufi Fufi; the pair toiled around the city in an ice cream van stocked full of limited-edition wares from Hunter Gatherer, Grotesk, and Ben Loiz, among others. We interrupted Ilizarbe drawing "snakes with weird skin patterns" and asked him what's good.

[www.freegums.com](http://www.freegums.com)







**Where does the name Freegums come from?**

When I was in college, I needed to make money and so I started doing these big house parties. I needed a name to tie them all in, like Mr. Freegums Toilet Swamps and Mr. and Mrs. Freegums Dance-a-lot. That's how I gave birth to the name.

**What are your three favorite t-shirts in your closet?**

The first is a Stop Police Brutality shirt I made years ago; it fits so good. It's black with a crazy list of names on the inside, which makes people wanna read it. Then there's a mint t-shirt sample from some blank-maker in Fresno. It fits nice, feels good, and is faded just right. The last is an Eagle Claw "Razor Sharp" promo shirt. I hate it when I remember a good shirt but don't know where it is... It's like my washing machine ate it.

**What music do you listen to when you work?**

Cash, Madlib, Fleetwood Mac, Daft Punk, Nas, The Wu Tanga Manga Clan, Prince (this guy is at the top of my list), Bloc Party. My favorite song these past few days is "X's And O's (Kisses And Hugs)" by David Allan Coe.

**If you could collaborate with one other designer who would it be?**

Herb Lubalin. That guy is amazing: his composition, great type treatment, great publications. Look him up—you'll see why. I hope to leave a lot of great work like he did.

**Tell us about the ice cream truck you did for Art Basel.**

That was one of the best projects I've done. It was a lot of work and it was a lot of fun. I got no sleep for about two weeks and was in a pissy mood but in the end everything fell right into place. It started with a bigger group of people but we all couldn't agree on a theme and it fell apart last minute. So Mike [Del Marmol of Typestereo] and I embarked on a mission. We went around to ice cream wholesalers and saw postings on the wall about trucks for sale. One came through and we gutted it out, cleaned it up, fine tuned the '57 Chevy engine, put a couch in it with a touch of AstroTurf, reached out to a lot of artists and made it happen. We met a lot of crazy out-of-towners and saw a lot of interesting people. Mike's wife Cindy got Universal Studios to buy the truck from us to use for an upcoming movie version of *Reno 911!: Miami*. They blew up (the truck) over the Port of Miami. Fufi Fufi blowing up, kid!

**What is your favorite spot in Miami?**

Miami is such a beautiful place. It is home to the World's Steepest Parking Lot Ramp. I like taking people there and just putting the car in neutral and riding down it. You should see their faces—it's like they are on a rollercoaster for 1.5 seconds. Amazing. Going airboat riding is great too. There used to be a three-story treehouse right by the water and it was like a two-mile hike to get to it but after all the hurricanes it's barely survived.

**What qualities do you most value in other people?**

When people look at you in the eye when talking, and shaking hands. Also, when people can be themselves and not worry about how they are being perceived.

**What projects have you got coming up?**

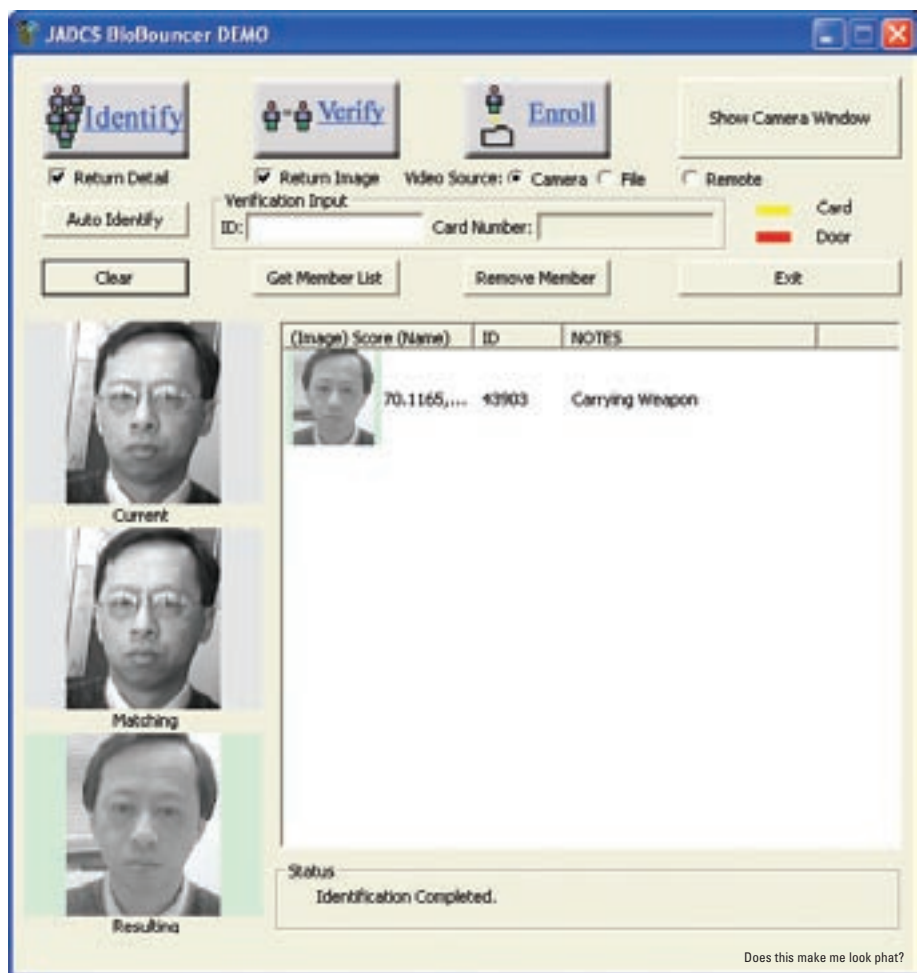
I'm working on patterned textiles and garments for 2007; in the planning stages of making an album with Sam Borkensen from Friends With You, and I have something going on for the Select Media festival in Chicago that Ed from *Lumpen* puts together with a lovely group of people.

**Is the whole hand-drawn thing getting out of control?**

Not really. Nothing will ever be as bad as how graffiti got, like the really bad "graffiti" fonts people use.

**Can you talk about the inspirations behind some of your Freegums shirts?**

My past line was centered around wildlife. I went to every public library in South Florida looking through hundreds of books and found a lot of good stuff. At times I find myself using Spanish words and working them into my designs, like Muelas Gratis. It stands for "free molars." I was trying to say "free gums"—that would be "encillas gratis"—but after I had drawn it and everything, I was like, whatever, shit looks good. The infamous Freegums Claw shirt came from an early Saturday adventure a bunch of friends and I took to the Everglades. We went airboat riding like crazy rednecks and then walked around looking at alligators. I was mesmerized by their stubby feet; we named one of them "Club Foot." When I got home, I was drawing one of them and I was like "Ohh shit! This would look great on a shirt coming out of your neck like 'Arghhhhhhhh, I want you!'"



# EYE IN THE SKY

IS A NEW HIGH-TECH SECURITY SYSTEM FOR CLUBS A BLESSING OR CLUBLAND'S BIG BROTHER? WORDS: PATRICK SISSON

Anybody with a healthy nightlife has endured serious (and unnecessary) scrutiny while entering a club, whether it's undergoing a popularity contest to pass through the velvet ropes or the rough security checks at crowded concerts. But a new security system being introduced this year adds a computerized—some would say creepy—edge to the typical screening process.

Enter BioBouncer, a state-of-the-art security system and “electronic face book,” according to Jeff Dussich, the founder of JAD Communications and Security, a New York-based company that's developing and marketing the technology. A system of unobtrusive cameras that uses 2D and 3D facial-recognition technology to identify unwanted or troublesome customers, BioBouncer, which costs roughly \$7500 (plus monthly licensing fees), is meant to be an electronic savior that helps high-traffic bars and clubs become safer and more secure.

Introduced in March at the Nightclub & Bar Tradeshow in Las Vegas—and currently undergoing trial runs at select clubs around the country—BioBouncer is a simple setup. A pair of

video cameras scans and analyzes patrons and checks them against images in the club's database of problem customers. These customers—who were kicked out for causing trouble or violating club policy—had their pictures captured by trigger cameras at the exits and added to the system's database. When they try to re-enter the venue at a later date, BioBouncer picks their photo out of the database, alerts the owner and security personnel (via a computer screen or wireless message), and the real-life bouncers get to work. Dussich wouldn't comment on when and where BioBouncer made its debut, but club owners from as far away as Germany, Italy, and New Zealand have all expressed interest.

Similar technology has found its way into airports and onto city streets (London is a known customer of such tech), all in the name of preventing terrorism. Even Chicago mayor Richard Daley has slated his interest in the club-watching technology. But do clubs, which already require ID, need more wired security? While it all sounds straightforward and safe, this kind of surveillance makes people nervous for a reason. Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union have raised concerns about the technology in the past, citing the level of intrusiveness and high incidence of false identification as potential problems. Since BioBouncer allows clubs to link up their databases and share information, the possibility exists that one bad night could get you on a digital blacklist.

“Who decides what a bad infraction is?” asks Beth Givens, director of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, a non-profit consumer-advocacy organization. “Can you be bounced from a club for the wrong reasons? One of the things I would question is accuracy. Are they going to get a good enough photo of someone to get a good biometric template? I think there could be room for abuse here.”

Even Dussich admits the technology can trigger anxiety. “It raises privacy concerns immediately,” he said. “That's why we're trying to be proactive before it snowballs into some Big Brother fear that we know is looming out there. It's not like I don't understand our generation and I'm out to hatch an evil plan. I'm 24.”

Dussich is certainly ready with answers. The system has been tested in all types of lighting conditions and only collects photos, not names or other info. It's not connected to national or government databases, so it won't scan for criminal records. Most importantly, he stresses, it only stores data on “troublesome” customers. The program automatically deletes everyone else's photos at the end of the night. Since human beings are making the final decision about kicking out customers, the system is more of a tool, not the final word.

Like any technology, biometrics won't create a Big Brother-type scenario by itself: People must misuse it first. But do we really need to have our faces scanned at the places we go to to enjoy ourselves and escape? Has their been a rise in nightclub violence to warrant this type of security? Is the added efficiency of this system worth the invasion of privacy? “This system, to me, sounds like a solution in search of a problem,” says Givens.

[www.biobouncer.com](http://www.biobouncer.com)

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